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THE THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA COLLECTION

Set and costume designs for ballet and theater

THE THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA COLLECTION

Set and costume designs for ballet and theater

Alexander Schouvaloff

Introduced by Serge Lifar

GENERAL EDITOR SIMON DE PURY

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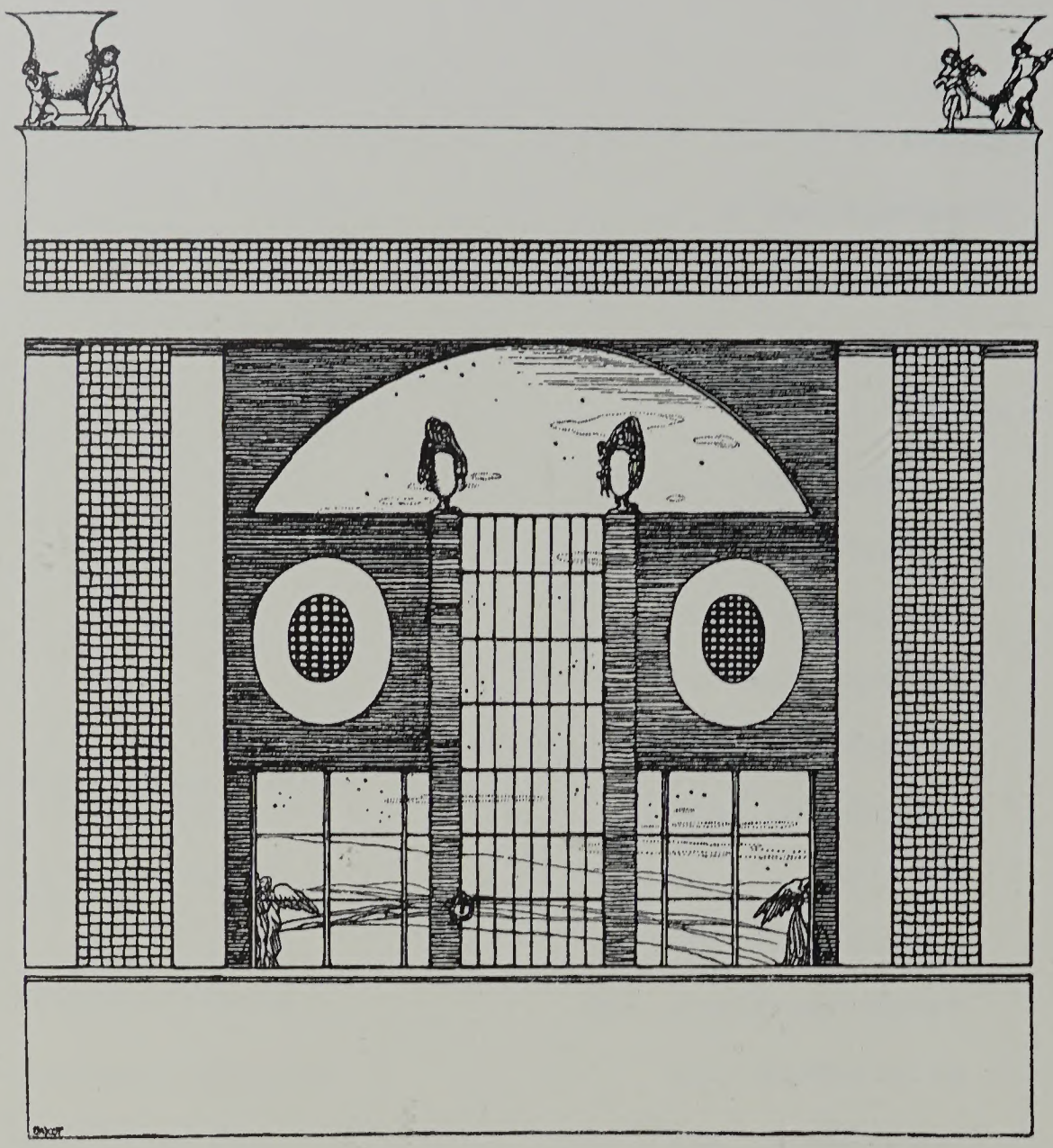


Foreword

This volume is the fourth in a series of catalogues to be produced on the various aspects of the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection. It focuses on a part of the collection that hitherto has been neither exhibited nor published: the set and costume designs.

The fifty-six drawings discussed and illustrated in the catalogue were acquired by Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza on the merits of their visual appeal rather than because of their association with ballet. They all hang in the Baron's Gloucestershire estate, Daylesford House.

The author, Count Alexander Schouvaloff, curator of the Theatre Museum, London, has engaged in extensive research on the works examined and on the artists' chronologies and exhibitions. The combination of his text and the high quality colour reproductions bring the works of art to life.

In this instance, we are particularly pleased to have had the collaboration of the Cornèr Bank in Lugano and their able administrator Mr Franco Vannotti who have produced volumes in English and Italian for their clients on the occasion of the XXXV anniversary of its foundation.

Simon de Pury

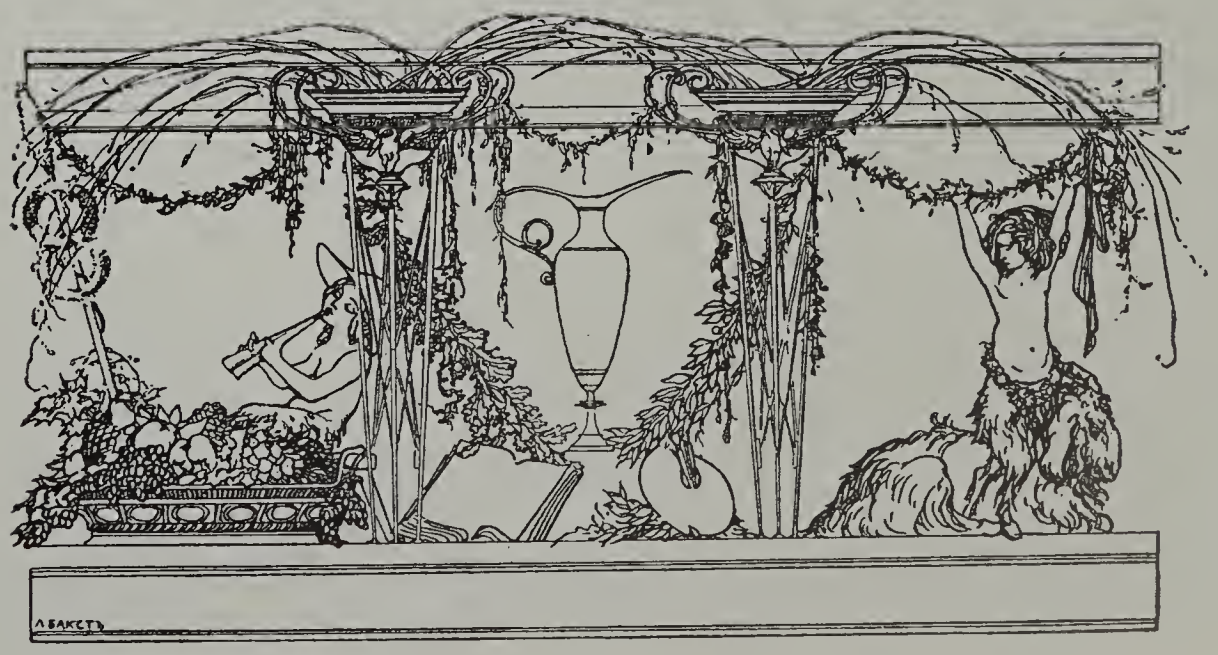
Acknowledgements

A catalogue of set and costume designs differs from a catalogue of paintings because each design is made for a production on stage. The first problem arises in correctly identifying that production. When I first began the research for this catalogue I knew there were certain gaps and inaccuracies in identification. Some errors had acquired a false historical truth and went on being repeated. Unravelling these false threads and filling the gaps has been fun. Although half a century has passed since most of these designs were made there are still enough people alive who knew and worked with the designers. It was difficult to find out about the designs for revue which unjustly still remain unappreciated by the majority of collectors, but it was almost impossible to discover much about the work of Alexandra Exter, an artist of genius. Most of her designs and projects remain enigmatic and unidentifiable.

In the preparation of this catalogue, many people, with enormous generosity, have given me the benefit of their knowledge and experience and I would have been lost without their help. I should like to express my warmest gratitude and thanks to the following: Asya Chorley and Constance Pemberton for finding a number of the supporting photographs and delving into sales catalogues for information about provenance; Philip Dyer who clarified the circumstances of *Aurora's Wedding*; Charles Spencer who helped in my pursuit of José de Zamora and Isidre Bravo of the Institut del Teatre, Barcelona for some important facts about this elusive artist; Mrs Salome Estorick and Rodney Capstick-Dale of the Grosvenor Gallery and Mrs Wendy Fisher for identification of designs by Erté; Michael Kauffmann who elucidated the iconography of Gontcharova's drawing of a priest; Dominique Sirop who gave me photocopies of documents he had found in Paris relating to Bakst and Paquin, and Valerie Mendes who put me in touch with him; Mrs Leonard Hutton of the Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York who sent a copy of a crucial catalogue of their exhibition of Alexandra Exter's Marionettes; Nina Dimitrievitch for information about Exter; Guillaume Garnier of the Musée de la Mode et du Costume in Paris for his advice about George Barbier; André Veinstein, Cécile Giteau, Marie-Françoise Christout, Sabine Coron and the staff of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal and Martine Kahane of the Musée de l'Opéra, Paris for all their unstinting help and kindness during my visits and for opening doors that were otherwise closed; Gilles Bernard of the Galerie Proscenium, Paris who sent details about his exhibitions of Erté; Anthony Holland who talked to me about Knossos in relation to Bakst's design for *Phaedre*; Vicki Martin of the Art Institute of Chicago, Jean Harrison of the Portland Art Museum, Melissa Brown of M. Knoedler & Co., New York and Audrey Frantz of the Baltimore Museum of Art who sent me invaluable information about Bakst and copies of catalogues; Peyton Skipwith of The Fine Art Society who gave me the

provenance of some designs by Bakst; Michelle Snapes and Pat Perilli of the British Film Institute who found stills of *L'Enfant de l'Amour* and *Monsieur Beaucaire* and added to my knowledge of Alexandra Exter; Tara Maginnis for details about Barbier; Susan Tripp of Evergreen House, to whom I was led by Sona Johnston of the Baltimore Museum of Art, and who sent photographs of the Evergreen Theatre and a copy of her illuminating article on Bakst; Irina Evstigneeva and the staff of the Leningrad Theatre Museum who helped with *Hippolytus* and *The Queen of Spades*; Nicholas Lynn of The Winter Palace, London who let me consult some rare catalogues of exhibitions of Russian art; Keith Geddes of the Science Museum who was a mine of information about *Atalanta*'s telephone; Arno Ohmstede of Zwemmer's, London who lent me his personal copy of *Lev Samoilovitch Bakst* by Irina Pruzhan, an invaluable book, published in Russia but out of print, which I could find nowhere else; and the cheerful and helpful staff of the newspaper department of the British Library at Colindale. The National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum was a constant source of reference. Even though I have used it for the past ten years I was surprised and impressed by the richness and scope of its resources. I should also like particularly to thank Graham Brandon who photographed most of the supporting illustrations with such sensitivity, often having had to work from inferior originals, and Joan A. Speers, my excellent editor, who bore my changes of mind, additions, subtractions and delays with eternal patience and good-humour. Finally, I say thank you to my wife, Daria, whose interest and enthusiasm for this book was a constant encouragement.

Alexander Schouvaloff



The theatrical magic of Léon Bakst by Serge Lifar

I did not know Léon Bakst as I only joined Diaghilev's Russian Ballet in 1923, but I did meet him once in Paris in 1924 about two months before he died. He was sitting in the Café de la Paix on the Boulevard Capucines at the Place de l'Opéra. On seeing Bakst, Diaghilev suddenly turned to me and said: 'Serge, sitting over there at a small table is Levushka Bakst. Let's go up to him and I'll introduce you.' We approached him: 'Levushka, hello,' said Diaghilev stretching out a hand. Bakst looked up angrily at Diaghilev, his old friend, took off his pince-nez and turned away abruptly. We left and went on our way. What had happened? 'Why this hostility?' I asked Diaghilev. 'I'll give you the reason,' answered Diaghilev 'the break in our friendship was my fault. In 1922 after the triumphant season in London at the Alhambra when I resurrected Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty* with Olga Spessivtseva (whom I had sent for from Soviet Russia), the decorations and costumes were by Bakst, the ballet was unexpectedly closed at the insistence of our backer M.D. The reason for this was that Spessivtseva rejected his favours. He sequestered the ballet, stopped the production, the box office closed, the company dispersed, and I was left with Bakst and Stravinsky and a small group of dancers. We returned to Paris. Spessivtseva went back to the USSR to dance for the Mariinsky in Petrograd. However, the London crash didn't finish me. I started to arrange a new spring season for Paris. I had an agreement with Bakst for a new production – Stravinsky's *Mavra* – but I broke it and commissioned the sets from Survage. Bakst never forgave me and did everything in his power to blacken my name. In that year of 1922 he lured away Spessivtseva who had returned to me from the USSR. Unfortunately having failed to find me in Paris she had contacted her London acquaintance, the backer of Bakst's *Sleeping Beauty*, and he, out of spite against me, handed her on to the Grand Opéra. There she danced Giselle, the ballet which I had produced in Paris in 1910 in sets and costumes by Benois!'

Later, when we were in London, in December of that year Diaghilev learnt of 'Levushka's' death. He burst into violent sobs.

In Paris Diaghilev had already told me how dazzlingly successful had been the career of Léon Bakst in France, in Europe, across the seas, how his career had been rewarded with honours and critical esteem, how he had become his friend and collaborator on *Mir Iskusstvo* (*The World of Art*) and how, later in the West he had enchanted and bewitched everyone with his unique sense of colour in Diaghilev's Russian Ballet from 1909 to 1922.

It was Diaghilev's artistic 'credo' that ballet should be the synthesis of all the arts and should reflect the influences and ideas of its time. This Bakst helped him to achieve in the twelve productions which he designed for him. They were recognised as a major artistic revolution in twentieth-century art. Bakst, with Fokine as choreographer, collaborated in this 'new revolutionary art' with Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky and exultantly reinterpreted the works of Rimsky, Balakirev and Tchaikovsky. Bakst gave a new vision of the age and style of ancient Egypt, the Orient, classical Greece, the Romantic period and the golden age of the 'Grand Siècle' in the ballet *La Belle au Bois Dormant* which was his swan song. In praising Bakst's outstanding artistic contribution one must not forget the other Russian designers, Benois, Roerich, Golovine, Korovine, Larionov who, with their creative fire, decorated and sustained the Russian Ballet

Phèdre and Hippolyte by Serge Lifar

until 1917. When Diaghilev extended the boundaries of theatrical and musical expression by inviting Picasso, Matisse, Gris, Ernst and Miró to work for the first time in the theatre they had already learnt much in theatrical craftsmanship from the legacy of Bakst and Benois. Realism made way for cubism, surrealism, constructivism with their abstract language of form, line and colour. It was Diaghilev's Russian Ballet's development of this language, in fusion with the 'language' of ballet which has led inevitably to the naked male and female body (dressed in 'Maillots Académiques'). The art of dancing was enriched by a new geometric linear expression and a new technical 'vocabulary'. It was also Gordon Craig's theatrical principles and his use of *Draperies* instead of painted scenery which gave the dancer's art a new abstraction. Choreography reached a level of metaphysical expression. Today the age of Bakst has become a legend. He has his place of honour in the history of art and in the theatre museums all over the world. His art influenced fashion in all walks of life.

There are certain figures in the history of art who revolutionised aesthetic principles: Piero de la Francesca, Carpaccio. The same is true of the theatre: Berain in seventeenth-century France during the 'Golden Age' and Boquet in the eighteenth. After the theatrical reforms of Noverre who did away with stage bric-à-brac – wigs, farthingales, corsets, heels, feathers, 'jartières' – the new spirit of the Marseillaise democratised the world of theatre. The age of 'White Romanticism' dawned which obliged dancers to go on point. The long white *tu-tu* as ordered by Ciceri and Larn and worn in *La Sylphide* was swiftly supplanted by the short *tu-tu*. This classical ballet form led, after Bakst, during Diaghilev's artistic dictatorship to the full naked body and to a new aesthetic which had its origins in the celebrated *beauté naturelle* of Ancient Greece.

Serge Lifar

P.S. In Baron von Thyssen-Bornemisza's theatrical collection – in England – there are 22 designs from the hand of Bakst which today are valued as highly as the theatre designs of Picasso. His designs evoke the same intoxicating excitement from the new generation as they did from us.

(Translated from the Russian)

S.L., Ouchy, February 1985

Reflections on the theme of theatre design by way of introduction

This is the catalogue of a collection of fifty-six designs by thirteen artists. Almost all of them are for the theatre: for sets and costumes for ballets, operas, plays and revues. They were created during the first half of the twentieth century when theatre became a rediscovered art and was once more not only respectable, but also respected. The catalogue clarifies the collaboration between the impressario, designer, choreographer and dancer. The designer and choreographer make the 'grand design'; the performance follows.

Designs are part of a production and so the commentary on each of them in the catalogue is not only about the design itself but also about the production and how it was received by critics.

In writing about theatre it is important to make the distinction between the art of the theatre and theatre art. The first is performance, what the spectator sees on stage, the living picture peopled by actors in costume, bringing the scene to life. It is real but it is ephemeral. Theatre art is set and costume design which continues to exist after the performance is over. The challenge of theatre lies in combining the talents of the interpreters (actors, dancers, singers, directors) with the creators (playwrights, artists and composers). To succeed there has to be mutual understanding between the two and inevitably some compromise. The skill lies in minimising this compromise.

Theatre only begins to exist in front of an audience. When rehearsals are over, when the last piece of scenery has been touched up with paint, when the last costume has been stitched with needle and thread, when the performer is nervously waiting in the wings as the lights go down and the curtain has to go up at a first night the final and inescapable collaboration begins to take place between the stage and the auditorium. Theatre is often a matter of luck. It works its magic when it transforms both the performer and the spectator by transporting them out of themselves into a theatrical reality. It is a fearful risk but when it works there is no other art so powerful.

The designer for the stage is simultaneously creator and interpreter. His task is to interpret the text or score and from them create his own three-dimensional images which fix the performance in the memory. A production can never be recalled in abstract, the actor, the dancer, the singer is always remembered by the part he played through the costume he wore. The costume provides the outward character. The set places the character into a defined, memorable space.

A great designer is one whose set and costume designs transcend craft, and the craft is complex. He needs an encyclopaedic knowledge of art, of architecture, of social history and a practical knowledge of how a set is built, how a costume is made, how materials 'behave', how lighting works, how his whole effect will look on stage. A designer needs a knowledge of fashion, a great designer sets it. But he has to rely on other craftsmen – the scene painter, the costumier, all the other technicians – to interpret his designs, and so the compromise begins. The designer-craftsman gives accurate reproduction, imitation without invention. The designer-artist infuses his designs with his own imagination, and adds his own interpretation of the inner meaning of the text or the score to the outward expression, making the set and the

costumes symbols for the characters and the scenes. There are many craftsmen-designers, very few designer-artists.

Theatre art involves the discipline of drawing and painting and requires very concentrated work. A production may need a number of different sets and several hundred costumes. Each design is only one piece of an intricate whole. The designer has to anticipate the constantly moving and changing patterns created on stage by the director, choreographer, actor, dancer, singer. A design has to be considered in context with all the others for the same production. Every production is like a gigantic jig-saw puzzle which the designer has to juggle into meaningful shape. The design is a piece of the puzzle which is only solved by the audience and the performers on the first night.

The designer is also a sculptor and an architect. He expresses on paper what in his mind's eye is solid and real. He is a three-dimensional artist but theatre art is two-dimensional. (Though designers now tend to draw less than they did and design their sets straight off as models. Matisse and Chagall had already carried this technique to an extreme when they painted designs on Alicia Markova's costumes while she was wearing them.) An original design is a working drawing, an instruction for someone else to make a set or a costume from it. It often has notes written on it or swatches of material attached to it. A design, even with all its necessary instructions and even though it may be complete in itself, is only a fragment of the whole work for a production which is completed when all the sets have been built and all the costumes have been made.

Nearly always there are changes between the design and the finished set or costume. There may be many reasons for the changes: the scene painter may not mix the right colours, the costumier may not find the right trimmings, the actor or dancer may feel uncomfortable, there may not be enough money or the designer may have second thoughts. These pressures can often produce a better result than the original concept.

There is a dichotomy between the art of the theatre which is ephemeral and theatre art which is permanent. Each theatre design is also a document, a vital piece of evidence. It is a talisman which sparks the memory or evokes the performance for those who never saw it. Souvenir programmes, newspaper cuttings stuck in scrapbooks, hazy photographs, reminiscences and gossip (and, these days, video-tapes) are also useful documents but none is so evocative as the original design. Sets are fragile and eventually disintegrate, or bits of them are cannibalised for another production. Costumes are altered to fit different performers, sweat disintegrates the seams, washing and cleaning fades the cloth, they are thrown away. Sometimes there is a revival of a particularly successful production and the costumes are remade, but never with the original care. The designer is busy elsewhere, or perhaps even dead, and the wardrobe staff, without his critical eye, make do. This happened to the *Schéhérazade* costumes. They were remade and remade into ever dimmer shadows until they were unrecognisable. And therefore they were no longer genuine, and had lost their magic. The power of the talisman stays only with the original design.

By the end of the nineteenth century theatre design had degenerated into a mediocre craft. Someone ordered a sky, a forest or a castle. Scene painters were paid by the square metre. Sky was the cheapest, architecture the most expensive. The same sky, the same forest, the same castle would be used again and again. Sets were only an almost irrelevant background, only illustrations which sometimes strove for historical accuracy but symbolised nothing. The main

innovation during the century was the development of stage machinery. The influence of the engineer technician was paramount. Bigger and more complex theatres were built. The age of mass entertainment dawned. The more inventive and spectacular the tricks on stage the larger the audience, and the larger the audience the bigger the profits. Theatre had become a commercial business with little attention being concentrated on its artistic possibilities. The actor was left to choose what he wanted to wear and he had to pay for his wardrobe. He travelled from theatre to theatre with a trunk full of costumes and an armoury of swords and daggers.

The single most important invention for the business was electricity. In Europe, Richard d'Oyly Carte was the first to use electric light in a theatre in his new Savoy Theatre in London in 1881. The Théâtre des Variétés in Paris followed in 1882, the Residenztheater in Munich in 1883. By 1887 over fifty theatres were fitted with electricity. The ceaseless hiss of gas stopped. The actor's diction was transformed. He no longer had to bellow and declaim, but could speak more naturally. Orchestras could be heard without a competitive sound. Mariano Fortuny (1871–1949), a Spaniard who lived in Venice, was a painter, an architect and a designer. He revolutionised the way of printing on textiles and invented a method of pleating silk which has never been surpassed. His *delphos* dress directly inspired by the Greek chiton was later to have an influence on Bakst's own Hellenic designs. He was also the first designer to concentrate on lighting for the theatre and invented the diffused lighting effect which still bears his name.

A vital factor in the history of theatre was patronage. Today the state is the patron but earlier the patrons were royal or came from powerful ducal families who had total financial control of a theatrical production. They used their influence and taste to manipulate the artistic management of a performance. The last influential patron of this kind was a duke, Georg II von Meiningen (1826–1914), whose extraordinary talent and originality as designer and impressario revived and redefined the art of theatre. Having studied painting under Kaulbach (1805–74) he formed his own company which, from 1874, toured extensively throughout Europe including Russia. Constantin Stanislavsky (1865–1938), the founder with Vladimir Nemirovitch-Danchenko (1859–1943) of the Moscow Art Theatre, devoted a whole chapter of his book *My Life in Art* (1924) to his company. He wrote: 'During Lent, Moscow was visited by the famous ducal players of Meiningen, headed by the stage director Kronek. Their performances showed Moscow for the first time productions that were historically true, with well-directed mob scenes, fine outer form and amazing discipline. I did not miss a single one of their performances, I came not only to look but to study as well.' Stanislavsky put this meticulous preparation and intensive periods of rehearsal into practice at the Moscow Art Theatre. But the real innovation of the Meiningen company was that stage decoration, however 'historically true', should not be a background only, a mere illustration, but an appropriate setting for the action, that the actor should not be considered separately but that there should be a unity between them. Georg II's own drawings almost always show groups of figures at some point in the action and while his sets are realistic they are also symbolic because he only includes such architectural elements as are necessary to place the actor. These principles are commonplace now. They are observed by every company and by every designer of merit. But then they were new and made everyone who was seriously interested in the art of the theatre think afresh.

In Russia at the end of the nineteenth century, there was a patron who did more than anyone else to reinvigorate the theatre. He was Savva Ivanovitch Mamontov (1841–1918), a

merchant. In class-conscious Russia of that time merchants had a peculiar standing. Although they were very rich and lived in an opulent and lavish style owning large businesses and properties, they were not considered to be part of 'society'. But, because their wealth commanded a certain hesitant respect, they occasionally found themselves on the fringes of the nobility. Some of them were important collectors. They were the first to appreciate and patronise the French impressionist and post-impressionist painters. Their collections, now in state museums, immortalise their names: Tretyakov (whose widowed daughter married Bakst), Morozov, Shchukin. Energetic and inquisitive, they did more for the arts in Russia than any other group. Mamontov was equally interested in all the arts: painting, ceramics, sculpture, architecture, as well as the theatre. In 1870 he acquired the estate of Abramtsevo near Moscow which had belonged to the poet Aksakov. It became a colony for Russian artists; a centre where Mamontov could realise his ideal – the renaissance of Russian art. There was a private, amateur theatre on the estate. Mamontov's innovation was to encourage painters to design the productions. Stanislavsky, a cousin of Mamontov's, remembers in his *My Life in Art*: 'The productions of Mamontov played a great part in the decorative art of the Russian theatre; they interested talented artists, and from that time on, true painters appeared on the horizon of the theatre who gradually began to supplant the horrible house painters who were the only decorators the theatre had known in the past.' Mamontov was infuriated by the general mediocrity of the productions at the Imperial Theatres. The ban on public theatres in Russia was only lifted in 1883 so it was not until 1885 that he was able to bring his ideas of production before a public audience by founding his Private Opera company. The first season, at the Kamerny Pereulok theatre in Moscow, began with Glinka's patriotic Russian opera *A Life for the Tsar*, designed by the distinguished landscape painter Isaak Levitan (1860–1900). But this first cycle proved to be too expensive even for Mamontov and the seasons were discontinued in 1892. He revived them, however, in 1896 with much greater success. Moscow saw and heard Feodor Chaliapin (1873–1938) for the first time.

The artist had come to the theatre. Mamontov was directly responsible for this revolution. Easel painters who had previously worked on portraits and landscapes were commissioned to do stage décor: Mikhail Vrubel (1856–1910), Constantin Korovin (1861–1939), Valentin Serov (1865–1911), Victor Vaznetsov (1848–1925), Alexander Golovin (1863–1930), Levitan, the Polenovs, Vasili (1844–1927) and Elena (1850–98) and others. Their influence was immense, particularly on a remarkable group of people who became known collectively as *Mir Iskusstvo (The World of Art)*.

In St Petersburg in about 1889, Alexandre Benois (1870–1960) gathered round him a number of enthusiastic young artists and writers who at first called themselves the Nevsky Pickwickians. The first members included Evgeny Lanceray (1875–1946), Constantin Somov (1869–1939), Walter Nouvel (1871–1949) and Dimitri Filosofov (1872–1940). They often met at the Benois household and round the samovar they discussed artistic ideals, philosophical notions and aesthetic principles. But they did not merely indulge in passionate but frivolous discussion. Although they conducted serious and structured meetings with a programme of learned papers given by members, they had, in the beginning, no definite aims or objectives except to explore the world of art. In 1890 the group was joined by Léon Bakst (1866–1924), Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947) and Serge Diaghilev (1872–1929) who, arriving from the provincial town of Perm, was introduced by his cousin Filosofov. Benois was the inspiration and the intellectual whose work always reflected a scholarly approach. Bakst was the more

Léon Bakst by Alexandre Benois

Serge Diaghilev

instinctive artist, and stood slightly apart from the others possibly because he was older and Jewish. But it was Diaghilev, a failed composer, who had the vision to develop and exploit their talents. He was the catalyst. He shaped the group and formed it into a team with defined objectives. He was the editor of a new magazine with the title *Mir Iskusstvo* to which they contributed articles and illustrations. Mamontov helped to fund the first issues. It was published from 1898 to 1904. Then, under Diaghilev's administration, they organised a series of exhibitions of paintings and determined to show Russian art to the West. Their first 'season' in Paris was an exhibition of Russian paintings in 1906, followed by a series of concerts of Russian music in 1907 and the first productions of opera and ballet in 1908 and 1909. Finally in 1910 Diaghilev produced his first complete programme of ballet. The World of Art became Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

The art of the theatre depends on the skill of the impressario. Diaghilev was an impressario of genius. Under his direction there was a mimimum of compromise. He was a master (often infuriating and impossible) who manipulated the strands of theatre into a new form. He re-invented ballet with his first collaborators: the composer Stravinsky, the designers Benois and Bakst, the choreographer Fokine, and his two dancer-interpreters Nijinsky and Karsavina. He understood their individual talents and was able to co-ordinate them. Part of their initial

success was because no one in the West had ever seen anything like it before. The asiatic splendour of the costumes, the vibrant colours of the scenery, the vigour and eroticism of the dancing amazed Europe which had never dreamed that anything so brilliantly sophisticated and original could come from 'barbaric' Russia. Not enough emphasis has been placed on the 'Russian-ness' of the Ballets Russes company. They benefited enormously from the fact that they were forced together into a close artistic companionship bound by their customs and language. They all worked together, not without quarrel or argument, to create the new form about which Wagner had theorised in 1850–51 in *The work of art of the future*: 'The supreme work of art is the drama. Given that it can be perfect, it can, however, only exist when all the arts contained in it reach the highest perfection.' This is the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or synthesis of all the arts. Wagner had invented the music drama but with Diaghilev ballet became the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. It exploded on Paris in 1909 and shattered all notions of the art of the theatre.

Later, because of the First World War and the Russian Revolution Diaghilev became an emigré in the West and turned to European artists. He commissioned Picasso, Matisse, Derain, Laurencin, Sert, Miró and Debussy, Ravel, Milhaud, Richard Strauss, Constant Lambert. The Ballets Russes became international but ironically never performed in Russia. Diaghilev and his company, expatriates, roamed the world, living out of cabin-trunks, making their homes in hotels in Paris, Monte Carlo, London, Dresden, Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Rome, Venice, Madrid, New York, Buenos Aires.

Diaghilev, deeply superstitious, and warned by a fortune-teller that he would die at sea, never crossed the Atlantic with his Company on their tours. But fate caught up with him in Venice where he died in 1929. The ballet did not die with him. It lived on with his dancers: George Balanchine and the New York City Ballet, Ninette de Valois and The Royal Ballet, Serge Lifar and the Paris Opéra Ballet, Marie Rambert and the Ballet Rambert. Diaghilev's artistic legacy was the one-act ballet as a total work of art.

Often this legacy has been wasted. The painter is again ignored. Ballet develops into pure dance in all-over tights against a background of black drapes. There is a revolt against the imagined 'prettiness' and distraction of painting. But fashion goes in circles. The painter has not been abandoned: Robert Rauschenberg, Isamu Noguchi, Sidney Nolan, Heinz-Dieter Pietsch, Bridget Riley, Howard Hodgkin, David Hockney. The painter is on the stage again.

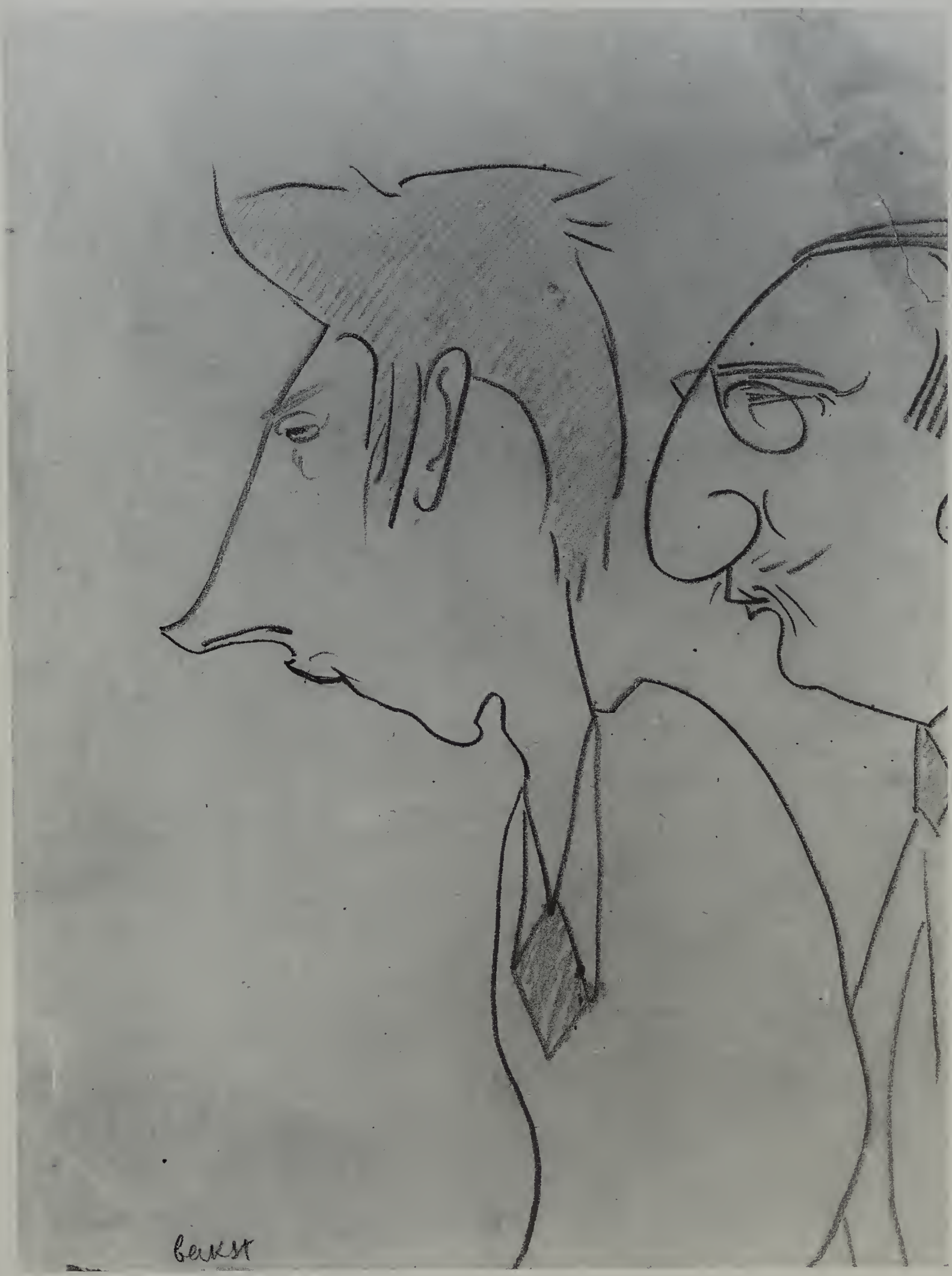
The Ballets Russes demonstrated an ideal of theatre. They propounded no theories. They got on with the job. Theory is the business of critics who need labels of convenience to describe the creative process of which the painter himself is probably unaware. Naturalism, realism, symbolism, cubism, constructivism, futurism, rayonnism are labels for a tidy mind determined to order irrepressible originality, curiosity and energetic experiment into defined and confined compartments. Some so-called artists merely follow fashion but great artists are unaffected by 'isms'. They may set the fashion, even write a manifesto for a new 'ism' (Larionov and rayonnism) but in the very act of doing so they make an imaginative leap which lesser artists are incapable of making. Great artists and great designers for the theatre cannot be labelled. The critic, however, needs the consolation of order. He needs to pigeon-hole artistic influences. But the art of the theatre is not a tidy art. It is almost impossible to draw accurate conclusions about theatre because unlike any other art there is always the compromise which interferes with the original concept, and the critic remains unaware that the effect which he most praises may only have been achieved fortuitously.

Lev Samoilovitch Rosenberg, a Jew who took the name Bakst from his grandmother, fitted uneasily at first into the World of Art group. He looked different, curiously dapper, with a waxed moustache. He had an unusual Russian accent. He was ambitious. One evening, when the group had gathered together at the Benois' for one of their regular meetings to discuss how they were going to change the world and argue about their aspirations, each member in turn announced what he most wanted. Bakst said that he wanted to be the most famous artist in the world, not necessarily the best, but the most famous. This was in the early days, before the Ballets Russes existed. At the time, Bakst was a talented 'professional' artist making a living with book illustrations, occasional paintings and pencil portraits, deciding, in the end, that his real talent lay in making portraits. The theatre was only a dream. But Bakst grabbed at the chance of working for it when it was offered to him. The Thyssen Collection contains one of his earliest designs: costumes for *Hippolytus* in 1902 [1].* This production was a tentative beginning for the designer but Bakst the painter had already understood theatre. He painted a décor for the stage which embodied the new ideas of theatre design of imaginative realism rather than historical accuracy. This was not, by then, an original notion but Bakst achieved a noticeably harmonious effect even though he used unspectacular colours. Of all the influences on Bakst there is no doubt that the visit he made to Greece with his friend Valentin Serov in 1907 had the profoundest effect upon him as an artist. It transformed his palette. It inspired him to become a truly original artist of the theatre. Bakst began to use a juxtaposition of violent colours that had not been used on stage before. The first effects were seen in Paris in 1909 in *Cléopâtre* to be followed by the overwhelming *Schéhérazade* in 1910 [2]. Bakstian became an adjective. It meant richness of tone, blues, golds, oranges, greens, yellows. It also meant that effect of voluptuous extravagance which only his combination of colours and materials gave. Critics, stuck for words, used 'sumptuous' over and over again to describe the sets and the costumes. It is an inadequate word because it denies Bakst the individual approach he had to every production. They were all sumptuous, yes, but in a different way. Bakst always considered his palette carefully. The range of colours he used in *Le Dieu Bleu* [4] is unlike the one he used in *Hélène de Sparte* [8] or *The Sleeping Princess* [12]. The colours are always right for each production. The sets and the costumes catch the mood. In his theatre work he was a faithful though often impatient collaborator. Many productions were a total success: *Schéhérazade* [2], *Judith* [17]. Others were less successful for one reason or another, but the reason was never Bakst's designs. *La Pisanelle ou La Mort Parfumée* [10] and *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* [16] were both by Gabriele d'Annunzio (1863–1938) and starred Ida Rubinstein, and while the majority of critics succumbed to the bizarre bisexual charms of the Russian dancer turned actress a number of others thought that the plays were ridiculous, futile and boring. But for Bakst there was only praise. *La Péri* [3] is the essence of Bakst in colour and drawing but the design was never made into a costume because Diaghilev quarrelled with the composer Dukas whose mistress, Trouhanova, he considered to be incapable of dancing the part. Jean Cocteau's libretto and Reynaldo Hahn's music for *Le Dieu Bleu* [4], [5], [6], [7] did not match the perfect invention of Bakst's designs. It was an unequal collaboration. The set design for *The Sleeping Princess* [12] proved to be impractical and unnecessary but the production remains Bakst's masterpiece. The design is a marvel.

Bakst achieved his ambition with *Schéhérazade*. His fame was assured from that moment. He was the first artist of the theatre to have a one-man exhibition of his designs in an art gallery. He was the first artist of the theatre to have his design (the set for *Schéhérazade*) bought by a

Caricature of Bakst and Jean Cocte
by Léon Bakst

*Catalogue entries are referred to in square brackets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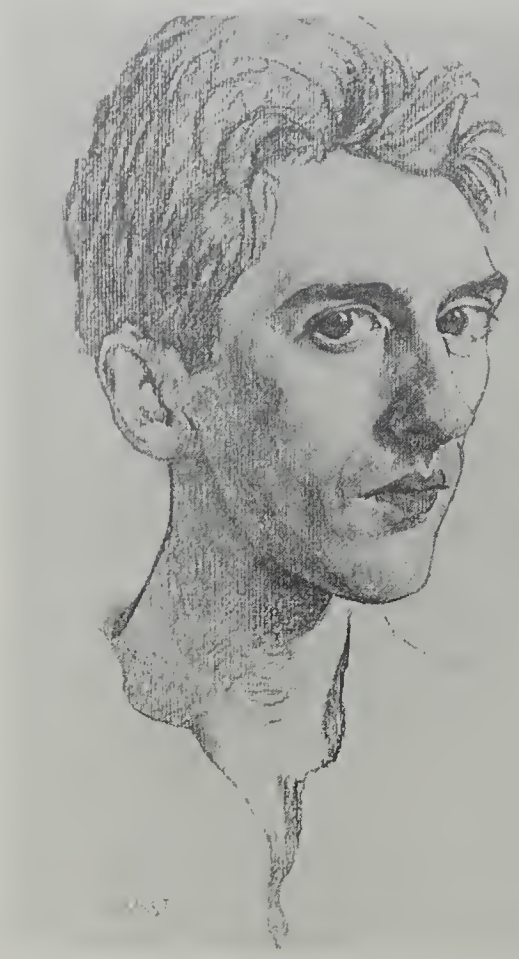
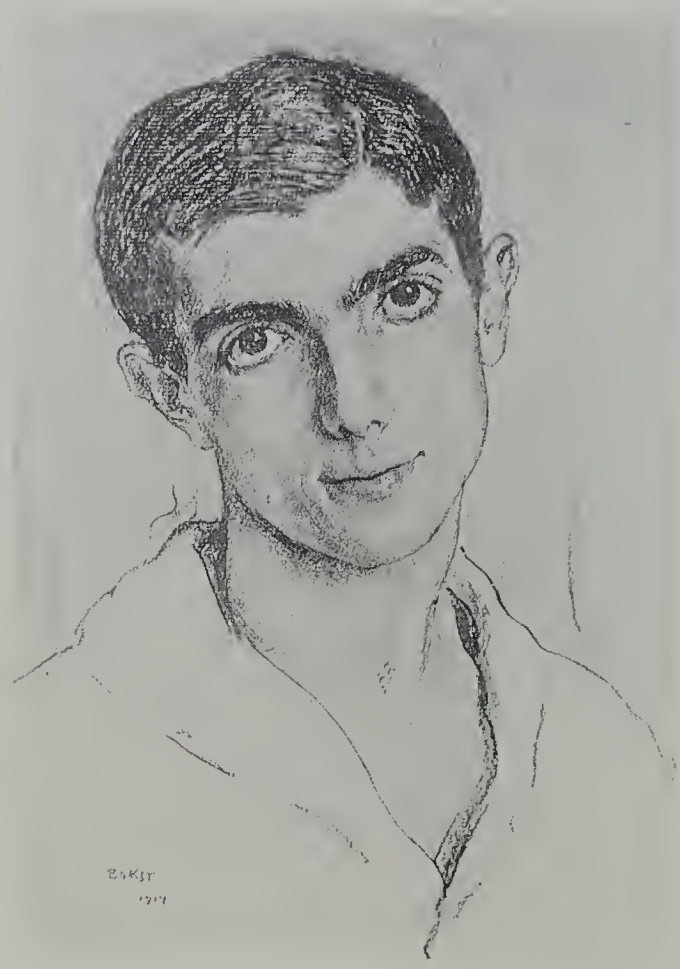


Portrait of Jean Cocteau by Léon Bakst



Portrait of Leonid Massine by Léon Bakst

museum. His designs were lovingly reproduced in expensive limited edition books – a cheaper alternative for all those who wanted to possess an original Bakst. For them he made special, larger, exhibition drawings [18], [19]. The adjective Bakstian was applied not just to the theatre but to *haute couture* [9], interior decoration, the fashion of the day. He was certainly the most famous artist of the theatre. He died in 1924. His influence continues, not with his paltry imitators [23], but with all the designers for the theatre who are not afraid of using colour.

This collection of designs by Bakst (and one by an imitator) shows all the sides of his work throughout his time in the theatre. One can see how he develops and learns to dominate stagecraft without ever being swamped by it, how his imagination was original and unique. He still remains the most famous artist of the theatre.

Bakst wrote very little about his work or his methods. He gave very few interviews. He was a mysteriously secret man. The bald facts of his life and career are tabled in the Chronology at the end of the catalogue but they reveal little. Journalists wrote uncritical eulogies: theatre critics often only repeated the word 'sumptuous' when describing the effect of his work. The notes to the designs in the Thyssen Collection include a description of what else Bakst was doing then and what effect his work had on theatre critics. They also refer to other productions which were designed by Bakst but are not represented in the collection.

Diaghilev's other collaborators whose work is represented in this collection are Alexandre Benois [29], [30], [31], [32], [33], Nathalie Gontcharova [45], [46], [47] and Michel Larionov [48].

Alexandre Benois came from a family of artists: his father was an architect, his brother was a painter who taught Bakst. His niece Nadia, whose son is Peter Ustinov, was also a theatre designer. Alexandre's son, Nicolas [34], [35] inherited his father's interest and talent. In the family the talk was always about art. It was like a religion. It was natural, therefore, that the young group of enthusiastic idealists who called themselves The World of Art should meet at Benois' house. Benois himself acquired a profound knowledge of the history of art. By 1902 he had published a two-volume history of nineteenth-century Russian painting. For many years he regularly wrote discerning articles on art and reviews of theatrical productions for a number of magazines and newspapers (see Bibliography). After the revolution, until he left Russia for Paris, he was Director of the Hermitage Museum. He always kept his reverence for art. One day, in extreme old age and very frail, he was going round his beloved Louvre supported on the arm of a young friend. As he came to his favourite paintings he stopped, doffed the cloth cap he always wore and bowed. 'What are you doing?' his friend inquired. 'A Master, you must always take your hat off to a Master.'

Benois was an extremely talented painter as well as being a writer. His favourite theme was Versailles and the court of Louis XIV. His work for the theatre was always in impeccable taste if somewhat limited in range, showing a scholarly accuracy in the direct tradition of earlier theatre. His wide knowledge of architecture ensured that there was a reality about his sets [29], [31] however fancifully he interpreted it [32]. Benois was not an innovative designer for the theatre. But what he had was an innocent charm, an abundance of wit, and a great sense of style. Benois' fame now mainly rests with *Petrushka* [33]. He was in the team which created one of the masterworks of the art of theatre.

Nathalie Gontcharova and Michel Larionov were both born in 1881 and met each other in 1898. They became inseparable although they only married each other towards the end of their lives in 1955. They were both primarily painters who also worked in the theatre. They became friends of Diaghilev in the early 1900s and left Russia to join him and Stravinsky in Switzerland in 1915.

Gontcharova soon started to work on designs for *Les Noces Villageoises*, then beginning to turn in Stravinsky's head which, eight years later and after several transformations, became the revolutionary ballet with its title shortened to *Les Noces* [46]. Stravinsky, the composer, Gontcharova, the designer, and Bronislava Nijinska, the choreographer, made a brilliant but not always harmonious team. *Les Noces* which began as a jolly peasant wedding changed to something more profound and came to embody a philosphical concept of marriage, its joys and its sorrows, its pains and its pleasures.

In the partnership of Gontcharova and Larionov, he was the intellectual, the theorist. Larionov invented rayonnism but his invention came from a deep appreciation of and devotion to Russian peasant art. *Kikimora* [48] was the radiantly joyful expression of some of his ideas.

Larionov looked to the future and was passionate about the development of art. Gontcharova explored new techniques in theatre design. Alexandre Benois looked to the past and adapted it for operas and ballets. Bakst was neither a theorist nor an academic about his work. He was his own master. They were all artists who helped to create the Ballets Russes.

Not so Alexandra Exter. Her marriage to a rich man meant that she was able to travel and she became the connecting link between East and West, Moscow and Paris. She made friends with Picasso, Braque, Apollinaire, Max Jacob and Marinetti. She brought early news of their work and theories to Russia.

Little of her work survives. That which does is often unfinished and unrealised. Sketches worked over and over in pencil, rubbed out, worked again, the pencil visibly agitating and striving to express on paper what is distinctly grasped by the mind. But the pencil fixes the thought and the colour stamps the form. It was the form of theatre costume that Exter changed [40], [41], [42], [43], [44]. The actor is made to fit the costume, not the costume the actor. The theories of Adolphe Appia collected in *L'Oeuvre d'art vivant* and Edward Gordon Craig in *On the art of the theatre* were read but hardly grasped at the time. They did not care to put their theories into practice on the stage. But they shook the bones of theatre. And certain people began to think again. They began to practise a new art. Alexander Tairov started the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow in 1914 with Gontcharova doing the designs for *The Fan* by Goldoni. But the revolution in the theatre came in 1916 with the designs which Exter made for *Famira Kifared*. The proscenium remained but the set acquired a new third dimension of different planes in both the décor and costumes. It was instantly labelled 'constructivism'. But it was the bones being reassembled.

After Bakst the colour was new. After Exter the form was new. But painters still provided both the colour and the form.

The art of the theatre is also the art of the impossible made possible. The imagination of the artist, expressed on paper, is made concrete by the craftsman. The colours and the forms are made real. The craftsman-artist matches the imagination precisely but interprets it on canvas and cloth so that an audience can 'read' it with equal understanding from the front row of the stalls or the back row of the gallery. But audiences hardly ever notice their names printed small in programmes. Vladimir (1880–1957) and Elizabeth (1887–1950) Polunin and Prince Shervashidze, craftsmen-artists, painted sets for Diaghilev, for Bakst and Picasso. Muelle made most of the costumes for Bakst. Our understanding of Bakst through the exquisite magic of his designs is incomplete. The costumes themselves, some of them now relics in museums, are the concrete clues to his art. Bakst is now prized (and priced) above all other artists of the theatre. In his lifetime many of his designs were reproduced in souvenir programmes, books and magazines, many were sold to admirers, and, since his death, many have been bought at exhibitions and auctions. The same designs have appeared and reappeared. But what has happened to all the hundreds of others? Where are all the other thousands of costumes? Unfortunately the life of theatre is production not preservation.

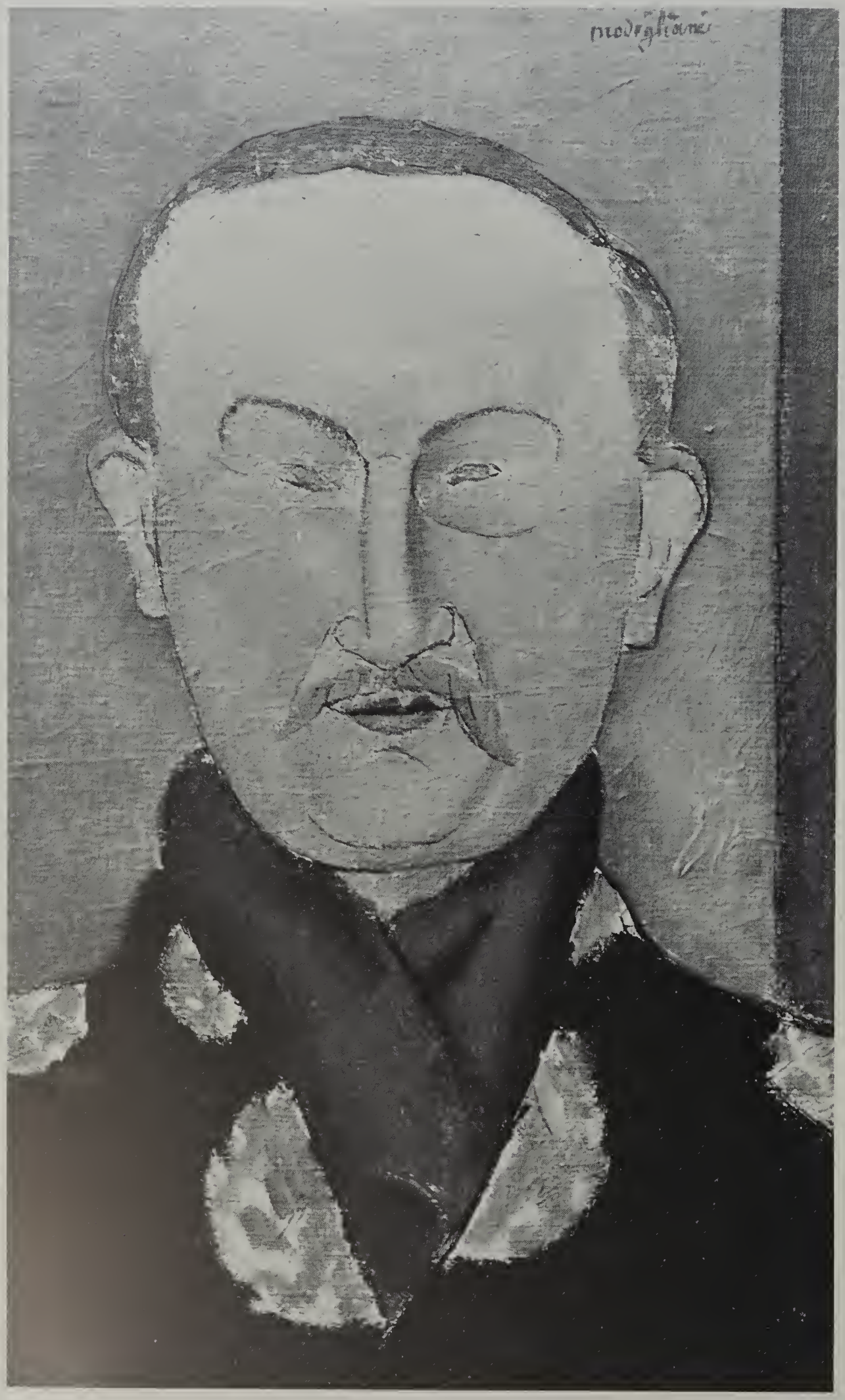
Nowhere is this more true than in the productions for French revue. George Barbier, Erté, José de Zamora and Lucien Bertaux, artists represented in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, all worked in this genre.

Barbier was one of many French artists to be swept up in the whirlwind of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes when they arrived in Paris in 1909. He was specially entranced by the dancing of Karsavina and Nijinsky and was inspired to illustrate two 'albums' devoted to the dancers in which he developed his inimitable line by delicately freezing moments in the action of the ballets: *Schéhérazade, Le Spectre de la Rose, L'Après-midi d'un Faune, Daphnis and Chloe, Jeux*. He was directly inspired by these ballets but was not an imitator of Bakst. Although he never worked for Diaghilev he designed a ballet for Pavlova. Barbier was also enamoured of the eighteenth century, of a particular and personal idea of the eighteenth century which he fashioned in his style [25], [26], [27], [28]. His most flamboyant work was for the film *Monsieur Beaucaire* [26] but which was only seen in black and white. His delicate use of colour was appreciated in the theatre [25] particularly at the Folies-Bergère.

French revue for audiences is pure entertainment, glamorous extravagance, tasteful eroticism, oomph, bezazz, and the nudes. French revue for composers, directors, designers, technicians, dancers and the nudes is work followed by work. French revue is also money.

Revues always have a regular pattern of programme: a big 'dressy' number followed by a big 'nudey' number: Versailles, perhaps, followed by the Nile, followed by a game of chess [51–56]. Always in good taste but always the contrast. Naked ladies should not be seen in the company of over-dressed pink-cheeked courtiers in breeches and powdered wigs (even though they are all girls whatever their dress). French revue is fanciful but pure. Number has to follow number in quick succession. No number can linger into familiarity. The programme is a crescendo of surprises. Revue is an immense logistical problem to the designer responsible for organising all the sets and costumes. Therefore a single revue is often designed by a number of different artists. This helps the technical problem, and the director can also more easily maintain the crescendo to the climax of a final number for all the company. Invention is all, and style. Revue is fun and fantasy for all the family. Erté invented a unique style: a glacial eroticism, which was sophisticated, déco, elegant [39]. Costume in revue has to conceal to reveal. The art is to reveal the sexy without the sex, the craft is to reveal the secret of the body. Erté, a Russian, who shortened his name Romain de Tirtoff to his initial letters pronounced in French, and José de Zamora, a Spaniard, as young men, both worked before the First World War for the French courturier Poiret in Paris where they learnt the craft of constructing a costume. In revue, costumes have to be constructed round the body and even 'nudes' have to wear something. Perhaps Erté and Zamora are the true 'constructivists'.

In the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, twenty-two designs are by Léon Bakst. Thirty-three are by eleven other artists and one by an imitator of Bakst. But Bakst is still the greatest artist because he is in the consciousness of every theatre designer. He changed the way we see things and we are changed when we look at his work.



Portrait of Léon Bakst
by Amadeo Modigliani

The catalogue

The catalogue is arranged chronologically in alphabetical order of artist.

Russian names have been transliterated into their generally accepted and usual anglicised form (thus 'Benois' not 'Benua' and 'Diaghilev' not 'Diaghilew'). However, the French spelling of Gontcharova has been used throughout in preference to the English Goncharova.

Russian dates are given in the old style followed by the new style in brackets. In the nineteenth century there was a difference of thirteen days; in the twentieth century there is a difference of fourteen days. When only one Russian date is given it has not been possible to verify whether it is in the old style or the new.

Where relevant, the production details and synopsis are given first. These are followed by the entry for each design for that production.

French productions as well as Ballets Russes productions, where the common title is in French, are called by their original French titles (thus *Le Dieu Bleu* and not *The Blue God*).

All translations from the Russian, unless otherwise acknowledged, have been made by the author.

Cross references to catalogue entries are indicated in square brackets.

All works are on paper. Some works have been laid down since they were made: these are described as 'laid down'. Some works were made on paper already laid down or wrapped round card: these are described as 'on card'.

Measurements, unless otherwise stated, are of the paper size in centimetres, height before width.

All inscriptions are by the artist unless otherwise indicated.

Provenance: the final entry shows when and where the work was acquired for the collection. Previous appearances in a sale room have also been noted where relevant because some vendors wish to remain anonymous and some buyers use code names.

Exhibitions: wherever possible reference has been made to the relevant exhibition catalogue. When this reference has not been possible or when the information has come from secondary sources the entry is preceded by: (?). In some cases it is known that a work was exhibited in a particular exhibition from the organisers' label on the back of the frame but if the number is not known it is left blank.

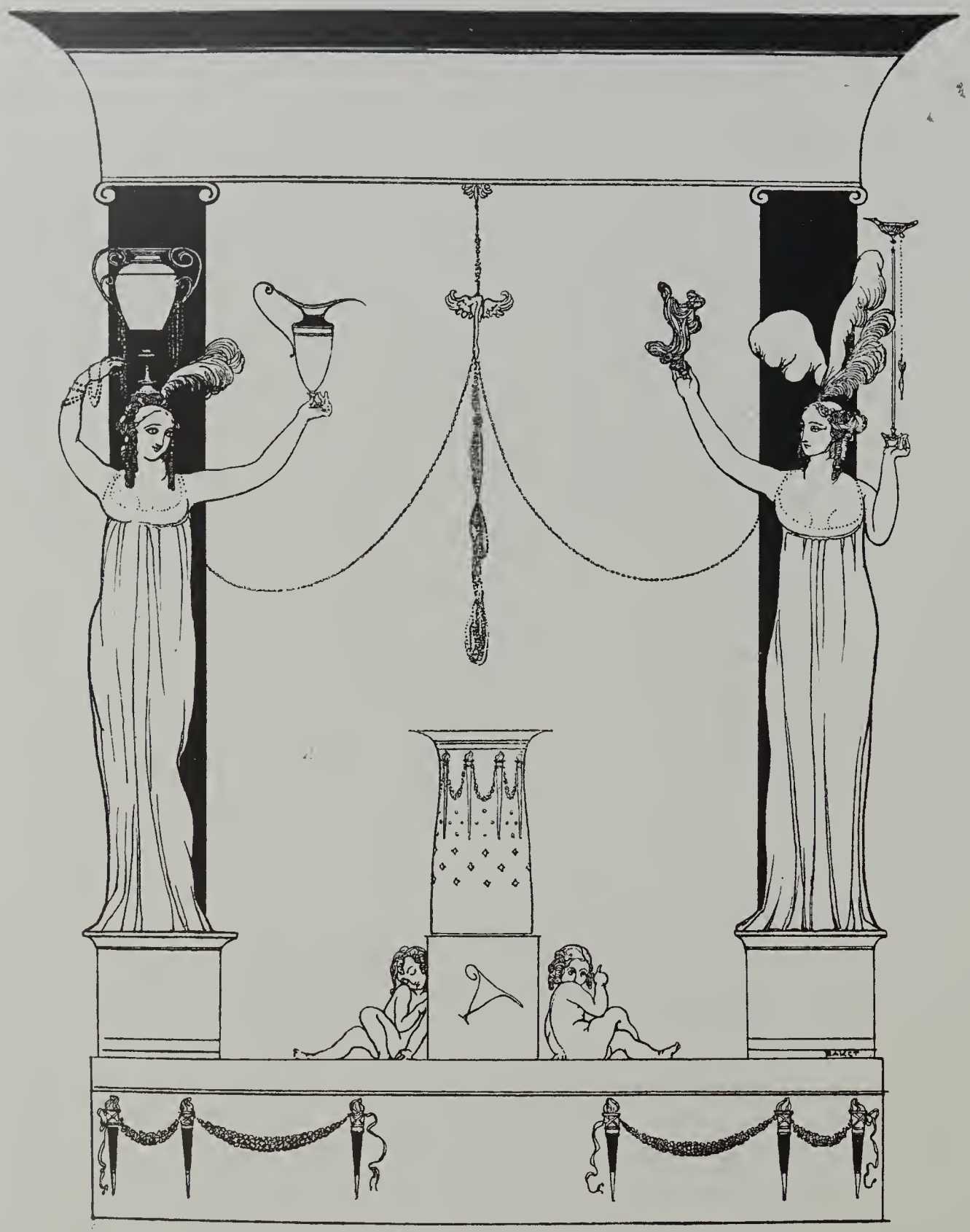
Literature: this is in two parts:

A References directly and specifically related to the particular design or drawing.

B Selected references (from the enormous number available) to articles and reviews in newspapers and periodicals discussing the interpretation of the artist's work on stage and other documentary material which have been consulted.

Books and general articles, unless they are directly relevant, are included in the separate Selected bibliography.

Collections: only public institutions which have designs for the same production have been included. In recent years designs have changed hands quite frequently and so information about private collections is unreliable and often out of date.



Hippolytus

Tragedy by Euripides
Translated by Dimitri Merezhkovsky

Director: Yuri Ozarovsky
Set and costumes: Léon Bakst
Composer: E. Overbeck

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
Aphrodite: Ekaterina Aga-Ogi-Gamza
Phaedra: Vera Michurina
Hippolytus: Georgi Yureff
Thesus: Ivan Schouvaloff
Nurse: Olga Uvarova
Messenger: Nikolai Khodotov

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Alexandrinsky Theatre, St Petersburg, 14(27) October 1902

Synopsis
Hippolytus, the bastard son of Theseus, has spurned Aphrodite the goddess of love, and prefers to spend his time hunting with Artemis. Phaedra, wife of Theseus, confesses to her Nurse that she is in love with Hippolytus. Hippolytus rails against women and rejects Phaedra's love for him. Phaedra is furious with the Nurse for having disclosed her secret passion and leaves to kill herself. Theseus returns to find that Phaedra has hanged herself. Phaedra has left a letter tied to her wrist. Theseus reads it and is horrified to discover that Hippolytus has violated his wife's honour. Hippolytus protests his innocence but cannot reveal the truth because of an oath he has made to the gods. Theseus does not believe him and banishes him. The Messenger brings the news that as Hippolytus was riding into exile a huge wave threw up a bull which made the horses stampede and crash the chariot against a rock. Hippolytus was thrown but was tangled in the reins and his head has been dashed against the rocks. Theseus tells the Messenger to bring Hippolytus to him. Artemis appears and tells Theseus the truth. Hippolytus is brought back to Theseus and Artemis explains that Aphrodite has been the cause of the tragedy because she hated Hippolytus' purity. Hippolytus realises that Aphrodite has destroyed not only himself but Phaedra and Theseus as well. He absolves his father and dies in his arms. Theseus proclaims his son's nobility.

Léon Bakst

1 Design for the first costume for an elderly lady of Phaedra's court with variations of detail for an old lady

Pencil, watercolour and gold paint
29 × 21.7 cm
Unsigned and undated
Inscribed in pen and ink in Russian:
Top left 'Pridvornaya dama "Phaedri"' (Phaedra's lady-in-waiting)/'pozhilaya' (elderly)
Top centre '1ii kostium' (1st costume)
Top right 'Ornamenti po verkhu 1ogo kostiuma' (design on the surface of 1st costume)
Centre right '2oi kostium staroy dami' (2nd costume of the old woman)/'zoloto' (gold)
Centre right (vertical) 'Nizhnaya iubka/verkh' (under skirt/over)
Bottom left 'Iubka 1ogo kostiuma rashita krasno-kor.' (the skirt of the first costume embroidered red-brown)/'Po ukazaniumu' (as indicated)
Bottom right 'Risunok po nizhni iubki 2ogo kostiuma' (design on the underskirt of the 2nd costume)

Provenance
The estate of the artist
Maria Constant
Sotheby's, London, 21 June 1978, lot 71

Exhibitions
London, Fine Art Society, *Bakst*, 3 December 1973–4 January 1974, no. 2

Literature
B Filosofov, D., *Mir Iskusstvo*, no. 3 (St Petersburg, 1902), pp. 45–47
Rozanov, V., *Mir Iskusstvo*, no. 9–10 (St Petersburg, 1902), pp. 240–48
Belyaev, U., *Novoe Vremya* (St Petersburg, 16(29) October 1902)
Journal de St Pétersbourg (20 October (2 November) 1902)

Collections
SET DESIGN
Leningrad, State Russian Museum
COSTUME DESIGNS
Armenia, National Gallery
Leningrad, Theatre Museum
Odessa, Art Museum

The design of *Hippolytus* was Bakst's first major commission for the theatre. Before this, in 1901, he had taken part in a co-operative design project with Benois, Lanceray, Serov and Korovine on *Sylvia*, a ballet with music by Delibes which was never produced, by providing the designs for the second scene and some of the costumes; and earlier, in 1902, he had designed the one-act ballet *Le Coeur de la Marquise*.

But *Hippolytus* was his first real challenge. Greece, things Greek and the Hellenic spirit already fascinated Bakst as they did many other contemporary artists. But Bakst had not yet been to Greece.[1] He therefore had to interpret his idea of Greece but he knew quite early on that it would clash with Merezhkovsky's ideas. In April 1902 Bakst wrote in a letter to Vladimir

Note
1 Bakst did not visit Greece until 1907, with his friend Valentin Serov

Трикотажная часть "Федры"
1-го костюма
Орнамент по бедру 1-го костюма
2-ой костюм
Старой дамы
Золото
Юбка 1-го костюма
рисунок по нижней юбке
2-го костюма

Telyakovsky: 'I'm afraid there is going to be a mutual misunderstanding between the translator and the artist because the former is going to ask of the latter things which will contradict with the style and manner of the setting.'[2] Bakst wanted to return to what he thought was the spirit of Ancient Greece and spent many hours in the cellars of the Hermitage studying Greek and Etruscan vases, tombs and special books. 'The design of the costumes and the set demanded from Bakst a great deal of artistic effort and special preparation.'[3]

This design is only for a minor character but already shows Bakst's individuality as a designer. It is not just a drawing of a costume for a costumier to work from; it is a drawing of a definite character, taking part in a play, wearing a costume. The attention to deatil is meticulous and the colour combinations between the two costumes have been carefully thought out in colours which Bakst at the time presumed to be particularly Greek. This drawing is a note for the actress as well as for the costumier.

Standards had been falling at the Alexandrinsky Theatre for a number of years. The direction was lax, the repertoire was weak and the productions were second-rate. In order to reverse the slide to further mediocrity a new director, P.P. Gneditch, was appointed in 1901. The first thing he did was to improve the quality of the design of the productions and to introduce classic Russian and West European plays into the repertoire.

Hippolytus, in the translation by Merezhkovsky, had already been performed in 1900 in a private theatre with some success. It was now chosen for the 1902 season to be followed, in 1904, by *Oedipus at Colonus*.[4] Gneditch commissioned Bakst because he was by then already 'un peintre de mérite'[5] and would also do the necessary research to achieve an historically accurate feel to the production. But, by all accounts, the result was not entirely successful even though 'the set and costumes were better than the production'.[6] The set, symbolic of Greek classical theatre, was an open space in front of the palace of Theseus in Troezen with huge statues of Aphrodite and Artemis in the foreground. After the dress rehearsal Korovine had to touch up the clouds in the sky on the borders because Bakst was ill at the time. The production was originally scheduled for 11 October but the first performance did not take place until three days later.

The production was supposedly in the style of classical theatre performed like a liturgy. The critics were unimpressed: 'The stage was overloaded with cardboard Greeks.'[7] Only the Messenger gave a good performance. Theseus was like a 'Greek from Odessa' as 'sweet as Turkish delight',[8] and 'quant aux autres personnages, à Phèdre surtout, mieux vaut n'en rien dire.' The same critic said 'l'élément principal, qui forme le fond de ce genre de représentations et qui manquait absolument au Théâtre Alexandra, c'est la simplicité antique, c'est la grandeur, la majesté, l'imposant.'[9]

The stage certainly does appear to be overloaded (figs 1 and 2). It all looks very old fashioned now. Bakst's painstaking research, evident from both the set and the costumes (fig. 3), inhibited his imagination. His fantasies only began after he had seen the real Greece.

Notes
2 Letter from Bakst to Telyakovsky, Director of all Imperial Russian Theatres from 2(14) May 1898 (Central Theatre Museum, A.A. Bakhrushin, Moscow)
3 *Novoe Vremya* (16(29) October 1902)
4 Alexandrinsky Theatre, 9(22) January 1904. Bakst also designed *Antigone*, privately for Ida Rubinstein, Novii Theatre, 16(29) April 1904
5 *Journal de St Pétersbourg* (20 October (2 November) 1902)
6 *Novoe Vrenya, op. cit.*
7 *Ibid.*
8 *Ibid.*
9 *Journal de St Pétersbourg, op. cit.*

Hippolytus, the last act, at the Alexandrinsky Theatre (Theatre Museum, Leningrad)

2 *Hippolytus, a scene from the production at the Alexandrinsky Theatre (Theatre Museum, Leningrad)*

[2] 3 *Michurina as Phaedre and Uvarova as the Nurse in Hippolytus at the Alexandrinsky Theatre. The patterns on their costumes are the same as in the design. Bakst kept a theme going through all the costumes of the characters connected with Phaedre (Theatre Museum, Leningrad)*

Schéhérazade

Choreographic drama in one act by Léon Bakst

Composer: Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
Choreographer: Michel Fokine
Set and costumes: Léon Bakst
Front cloth: Valentin Serov
Conductor: Nicolas Tcherepnine
Company: Les Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev

PRINCIPAL DANCERS
Schahriar, King of India and China: Alexis Boulgakov
Schah Zeman, his brother: Vasili Kissilev
Zobeida: Ida Rubinstein
Zobeida's favourite Negro: Vaslav Nijinsky
The Grand Eunuch: Enrico Cecchetti

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre national de l'Opéra, Paris, 4 June 1910

Synopsis
The ballet is based on the prologue to the 1001 nights.

Schahriar is in his harem. His brother, Schah Zeman, comes to tell him of his matrimonial troubles. They both pretend to go hunting and, as soon as they have gone, The Grand Eunuch opens first a bronze door through which enter Negroes dressed in copper, then a silver door through which enter other Negroes dressed in silver, and finally a gold door through which enters a Negro dressed in gold. This is Zobeida's favourite Negro. When the dancing is at its frenzied height, Schahriar returns. He is so angered by the orgy he sees that, at a sign from him, guards rush on waving scimitars and massacre all the dancers. Schahriar hesitates over the fate of Zobeida but she snatches a dagger from one of the guards, stabs herself and dies at the feet of her sovereign.

Léon Bakst

2 Design for Alexis Boulgakov's costume as Schahriar

Pencil, watercolour, gouache, gold and silver paint (laid down)
35.5 × 22 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1910
Inscribed on verso on card: 'Sultan/Boulgakoff 6/veste velour carmine'

Provenance
Miss Palmer, London
Issar Gourvitch
R. Clark, London
Sotheby's, London, 30 May 1974, lot 13

Exhibitions
London, Fine Art Society, *Léon Bakst*, June–July 1913, no. 74
Strasbourg, Ancienne Douane, *Les Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev*, 15 May–15 September 1969, no. 65
(Although the description and the measurements fit this may have been another version of the same design)

Literature
A *Comoedia Illustré*, Les Ballets Russes Supplement (15 June 1910), illustrated (This page of designs with additions and alterations to the layout was repeated in several souvenir programmes including, for example, December 1920)
B Bakst, Léon, letters to his wife dated 18(31) May and 23 May (4 June) 1910
Benois, Alexandre, *Rech* (St Petersburg, 12(25) July 1910)
Diaghilev, Serge, letter dated 4(17) September, Venice to *Rech* (St Petersburg, 10(23) September 1910) (in answer to letter from Rimsky-Korsakov's widow published in *Rech* (25 July 1910))
Serov, Valentin, letter to *Rech* (St Petersburg, 22 September (5 October) 1910)
Kostilev, N., *Apollon*, no. 9 (St Petersburg, 1910)
Tugenhold, J., *Apollon*, no. 10 (St Petersburg, 1910)
Prévost, Marcel, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 13 July 1910)

Collections
SET DESIGN
Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs
COSTUME DESIGNS
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum
Canberra, Australian National Gallery
Hartford, Connecticut, Wadsworth Atheneum
Stasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts

Although Boulgakov (as noted on the back of this design) created the role of Schahriar, it was Adolf Bolm who soon became identified with the part, just as Tamara Karsavina became identified with the part of Zobeida (fig. 1). They both danced at the Company's first performance of the ballet in Monte Carlo on 9 April 1911 and in London on 20 July 1911. This is why, by 1913, in the exhibition catalogue of The Fine Art Society, the design is described as 'Shah (M.Adolf Bolm)'.

That irrepressible impresario Charles B. Cochran, ruthless and unsentimental but passionate about all forms of theatre, wrote: '. . . although I journeyed to Paris with great interest to see the Ballet Russe on its first appearance there I was not prepared for the complete revelation which I encountered. In the course of many years of playgoing – entertainment of all kinds,

1 Adolf Bolm as Schahriar and Tamara Karsavina as Zabeida in Schéhérazade. Photograph by Bert, reproduced in Arthur Applin, The Stories of the Russian Ballet (London, c.1912) (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

opera, theatre, music-hall, and circus – I have only on very rare occasions seen a performance for which I was entirely unprepared, and have been swept off my feet by it. The choreography of Fokine, the scenery of Bakst and Benois, the music of Rimsky-Korsakov, the dancing of Tamara Karsavina, Vaslav Nijinsky, Lydia Lopokhova (now Lady Keynes), Vera Trefilova, Adolf Bolm, Theodore Koslov, and the superb *corps de ballet* transported me to fairyland. Here was something truly new and beautiful.'[1]

He was writing long after the event and he has obviously confused several performances and different years of the Russian Ballet but his memory is clear about the effect that those performances had upon him. *Schéhérazade* was given for the first time in Paris at the so-called fifth Russian season arranged by Diaghilev. In 1906 there had been an exhibition of Russian art in a setting designed by Bakst, in 1907 a series of concerts of Russian music and in 1908 the opera *Boris Godunov* with Chaliapin. In 1909 Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Maid of Pskov*,

Note
1 Cochran, Charles B., *Showman looks on* (London, 1945)

again with Chaliapin, was presented with the ballets *Le Pavillon d'Armide* and *Les Sylphides*, designed by Alexandre Benois, the *Polovtsian Dances* from *Prince Igor*, *Le Festin*, with costumes by Bakst and Benois, and *Cleopatra*, designed by Bakst. The first time that Diaghilev risked presenting only ballets was in 1910. As well as *Schéhérazade*, the new productions were *Giselle*, designed by Benois, *Les Orientales*, *The Firebird*, with two costumes designed by Bakst, and *Le Carnaval*, designed by Bakst.

In 1909 *Cleopatra* had been the talk of the town. Now, in the following year, the whole of Paris, like a nonchalant aesthete, was waiting to see what those Russian 'country bumkins' would do. 'Merely a repeat of the previous year's success would not be enough because however well disposed the public might be towards us, it is not easy to recognise another nation's excellence especially in a theatre like the Grand Opéra where we presented our productions. There, hundreds of pairs of eyes, among the subscribers and among the resident artists, are only too ready to say "it's just the same after all" and "they can't do anything else."'[2] But *Schéhérazade* was something new. The Russian Ballet passed that testing gaze. It overwhelmed the French. 'It was as if some electric shock had suddenly informed the whole of France of the feverish excitement which for us during these last few years surrounded the word 'theatre' and Paris somehow began to wake up from its theatrical drowsiness.'[3] Everyone was ecstatic. *Schéhérazade* was seen to be the achievement of Wagner's idea of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* where all the elements, the music, the design, the choreography, the dancing fused into a perfect whole. The entire production was a hitherto unseen harmony of colours, sounds and movements. Bakst wrote to his wife: 'The fantastic success of *Schéhérazade* (the whole of Paris now dresses in 'oriental' clothes) has forced Diaghilev to repeat it in the second programme.'[4] And, indeed, everyone was talking about Bakst and the Orient. But *Schéhérazade* was not the real Orient. It was the Russian idea of the Orient as seen by the French and they were taken in by it because they had not seen anything like it on stage before. There was nothing new about the Orient as such, everything was new about *Schéhérazade*. The music, firmly based on Russian folk music, was unlike any music for ballet that the French were used to. The choreography of Fokine demonstrated the strength and virtuosity of both Russian male dancers and the ensemble but it was not 'oriental'. Fokine himself wrote: 'I realise that Orientals do not live or dance in such manner. After the composition of this ballet, I undertook the study of authentic Oriental dances. But nothing would have induced me to stage my ballet in the authentic Oriental style, for such an undertaking would have required a genuine Oriental orchestra. The symphonic music of Rimsky-Korsakov would be completely unsuited. The Orient, based on authentic Arabic, Persian, and Hindu movements, was still the Orient of the imagination. Dancers with bare feet, performing mostly with their arms and torsos, constituted a concept far removed from the Oriental ballet of the time.'[5]

The design of the set and the costumes caused the first shock. The critic Pierre Lalo described what he saw: 'Sur la scène, un décor de plantation extrêmement simple et réduit à ses éléments essentials représente l'interieur du harem du shah: sorte d'énorme tente dont la couleur est le vert le plus intense et le plus splendide; un vert à la fois éclatant et soutenu, d'une violence et d'une richesse extraordinaires. Aucune autre couleur, ou presque: à peine, sur ces vastes surfaces vertes, deux ou trois grands dessins d'ornamentation persane, noirs ou rouge orangé. Le sol est couvert d'un tapis rouge orangé plus pâle. Au fond, des portes d'un bleu presque noir. Les costumes des hommes et des femmes, pour la plupart, sont faits des couleurs complémentaires du décor: des rouges diversement nuancés et quelques verts. Sur cette coloration générale jouent et scintillent discrètement les ors et les argents des costumes des nègres amoureux. Çà et là, des touches plus foncées, comme le vêtement du shah, où dominent les bleus et les violets sombres, et qui fait penser aux plus belles miniatures de Perse. Tout cela fait un ensemble d'une force et d'une harmonie merveilleuses: c'est un enchantement et un éblouissement perpétuels pour les regards. M. Bakst, le peinture russe qui a composé ce tableau admirable, combiné les couleurs du décor et des costumes, est en vérité un grand artiste.'[6]

Notes
2 Kostilev, N., *Apollon*, no.9 (St Petersburg, 1910)
3 Tugenhold, J., *Apollon*, no.10 (St Petersburg, 1910)
4 23 May (4 June) 1910 (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)
5 Fokine, Michel, *Memoirs of a ballet master* (London, 1961)
6 Quoted in Svetlov, Valerian, *Le ballet contemporain* (Paris, 1912), p.117. 'On stage, a set of extreme simplicity, reduced to its bare essentials which shows the interior of the Schah's harem: a sort of enormous tent of the most intense and magnificent bright green, a green which is dazzling yet constant, a green both violent and astonishingly sumptuous. No other colour, or practically none: a touch, on the immense green surface, of two or three large Persian designs, in black and orange red. The floor is covered with a carpet of orange red in a paler shade. At the back, doors of blue almost black. Most of the costumes for the men and women are in colours which complement the set: subtle tones of red and a few greens. Against this general colour scheme the gold and silver on the costumes of the amorous negroes discreetly glints and sparkles. Here and there darker touches of colour as in the costume of the Schah where blues and deep violets predominate and which recall the most beautiful Persian miniatures. It all combines to produce an effect of power and miraculous harmony. It is spell-binding and a constant thrill for the eye. Mr Bakst, the Russian painter, who created this wonderful picture with his colours for both the set and the costumes, is truly a great artist.'

des Costumes de "SHÉHÉRAZADE"
Aquarelles Originales
de Léon Bakst
Tous ceux qui ont pu voir le ballet oriental "SHÉHÉRAZADE", dansé à l'Opéra par les danseurs russes, sur l'admirable musique de Rimsky-Korsakoff, savent quelle part considérable les costumes et les décors tiennent, dans le succès à Paris, de ce drame chorégraphique.
Nous sommes heureux de pouvoir offrir à nos lecteurs quelques-unes des curieuses aquarelles de Léon Bakst, qui ont servi à exécuter les costumes de cette évocation brillante d'un conte Persan des "Mille et Une Nuits" L'artiste éminent, qui vient de se voir acquérir ses aquarelles, par le "Musée des Arts Décoratifs Français", a bien voulu nous en confier les originaux, pour en donner la primeur à COMŒDIA-ILLUSTRÉ.
V. D. L. R.

2 Double page spread of costume designs. Reproduced in Comoedia Illustré (Paris, 15 June 1910) (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Bakst certainly studied Persian painting, but in his designs did not slavishly imitate or reproduce anything he saw. This design is more complex, bolder, grander. The originality of Bakst is not that he interpreted the Orient or any particular style of painting but that he introduced into the theatre a palette of colours which had not been seen on a stage before (fig. 1). And he used the magic of colour to suggest the secret meaning of what was happening on that stage. Bakst's Orient of lush coloured costumes, cushions, rugs and hangings became the immediate fashion imitated by Parisian couture houses and interior decorators. But the imitations never matched the original.

Schéhérazade was the Ballets Russes' most famous and successful production. The public demanded it should stay in the repertoire but over the years it became very diluted. Any revival now gives us no real idea of the effect of that first production in 1910.

Schéhérazade also caused two rows, a private one and a public one. The private row was with Alexandre Benois who was astonished to find, when he opened his programme in the stalls of the theatre, that the libretto had been credited to Bakst instead of himself. He complained bitterly to Diaghilev who replied: '"*Que veux-tu?* Bakst had to be given something. You have *Pavillon d'Armide* and he will have *Schéhérazade*."'[7] Although Benois was very hurt and indignant he wrote a glowing report of Bakst's work for the newspaper *Rech*. 'But it is to Bakst that belongs the honour of having created the success of *Schéhérazade* as a spectacle, a production that is really amazing. . . . We see in *Schéhérazade* that Bakst can produce pictures

Note
7 Benois, Alexandre, *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet* (London, 1941), p. 311

that are truly great.' The wound was very deep, however. A letter from Serov written from Paris on about 4(11) June 1911 to Benois in which he says: 'According to those who attended the meetings when *Schéhérazade* was being worked out (apart from Argutinsky and Fokine whom I'll ask in London) Bakst had the right to put name to the libretto as the idea for the production was his and Diaghilev's' brought the reply from Benois from Lugano at the end of June: 'The idea to put on *Schéhérazade* belongs to Seriozha [Diaghilev] and to him alone. At the meeting, when he announced it, Bakst expressed extreme delight at the idea and thought up only two things for the production: a) to put the negroes into bags and throw them over the wall into a ditch and b) that Schéhérazade should propitiate the Sultan. That's all that Bakst suggested for the ballet *Schéhérazade, oeuvre du célèbre peintre* Bakst, as they print on every poster. Even Seriozha understood that that would never do and, heartily mocking the inventions of that crank Levushka [Bakst], turned to me as the specialist on libretti. . . . In the evening I had a meeting with Fokine during which I developed the whole outline in every detail and wrote it there and then on the piano score, wrote what I alone made up and not what you, according to those liars and scoundrels, think is some kind of collective work . . .' At about the same time Bakst wrote to his wife: 'Benois and I have broken up – for ever. You were right when you said that he was jealous of me.'[8]

The public row concerned the use of Rimsky-Korsakov's music. He was a much revered composer and Diaghilev was criticised for using the suite for a ballet for which it was not intended, for cutting it and for performing it without permission. The composer's widow complained publicly in the newspaper *Rech*: 'Not being able to sue Mr Diaghilev, I, as the sole inheritor of all the composer's rights in the works of Nikolai Andreevitch [Rimsky-Korsakov] am forced to make public the following matter. I should like it to be known in Russia as well as in France that I did not give Mr Diaghilev permission to change this work; that, therefore, Mr Diaghilev had no moral right to use this composition; and that I consider such an alteration shows a lack of respect for the memory of the composer, and that I will not cease to protest with the loudest voice that I can muster against such wilful and inartistic actions on the part of Mr Diaghilev.'[9] Diaghilev's reply began: 'Here, in Russia, people are divided into two categories – those who are for ever protesting "with the loudest voice" and those who are for ever silent. Both categories are equally useless, as they leave out completely a third category – those people who are "doers".' He goes on to demolish all the arguments against him with complete justification, admitting to using only the second and fourth parts of the suite but playing those parts without any alteration or cut and quoting the approval of Debussy, Dukas and Ravel. He ends his long letter by saying: 'In general there are very few events of any artistic merit and people are not sued for them particularly without having seen, without even having given oneself the trouble of seeing, how and what these people have created.'[10]

Notes
8 28 May (10 June) 1911 (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)
9 *Rech* (25 July (7 August) 1910)
10 *Rech* (10(23) September 1910)

[3] 1 *Carlotta Grisi in La Péri. Lithograph by Lemercier, c.1844, reproduced in Cyril W. Beaumont and Sacheverell Sitwell, The Romantic Ballet in Lithographs of the time (London, 1938), pl.26, p.195. This shows how far Bakst has developed from the traditional Romantic ballet costume (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

La Péri

Ballet in two acts by Théophile Gautier and Jean Coralli revised and adapted by Serge Diaghilev

Choreographer: Michel Fokine
Costumes: Léon Bakst
Composer: Paul Dukas

The principal dancers were to have been Natasha Trouhanova as La Péri and Vaslav Nijinsky as Iskender

The production was planned for the 1911 Ballets Russes season but did not take place. The ballet was subsequently performed by Trouhanova on 22 April 1912 at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris with sets and costumes designed by René Piot

The original ballet, with music by Frederic Burgmüller, was produced at the Opera, Paris on 17 July 1843 (fig. 1)

Synopsis
It is not known how Diaghilev intended to revise or adapt the libretto but, traditionally, it is the story of Iskender who, feeling that his youth is deserting him, steals a lotus (the flower of immortality) which he finds in the hands of a sleeping *peri* (a Persian sprite). She tries to get it back. In the end he gives it to her because he loves her; as she melts away he dies.

Léon Bakst

3 Design for Natasha Trouhanova's costume as La Péri

Lithograph coloured by hand in watercolour, gold and silver paint
No. 26 from an edition of 100
59.8 × 43.7 cm
Signed on the stone: Bakst
Dated on the stone: 1911
Inscribed on the stone: 'Péri/N. Trouhanova'
Stamped with blind stamp bottom left: 'Tiré à 100/26'
Stamped on back of frame: 'Serge Lifar' collection stamp

Provenance
Serge Lifar Collection
Ader, Picard, Tajan (Commissaires-Priseurs), Hôtel George V, Paris, 20 June 1974, lot 22

Exhibitions
Paris, Galerie Charpentier, *Danse et Divertissements*, 1948–49, no. 303
Paris, Musée Galliéra, *Paris 09–29*, 1957, no. 6
Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, *Les Années "25"*, 3 March–16 May 1966, no. 148
Strasbourg, Ancienne Douane, *Les Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev*, 15 May–15 September 1969, no. 128
Paris, Musée Galliéra, *Hommage à Diaghilev*, 23 June–3 September 1972, no. 5

Literature
B *Les Ballets Russes*, souvenir programme, 1911 season, Paris, original design illustrated
Les Ballets Russes, souvenir programme, 1916 tour, USA, original design illustrated
Alexandre, Arsène, *The Decorative art of Léon Bakst* (London, 1913), pl. no. 41, original design illustrated and credited as being in the collection of Jacques Doucet, Paris
Spencer, Charles, *Léon Bakst* (London, 1973), pl. XVII, original design illustrated and credited as being in the Serge Lifar Collection
Pruzhan, Irina N., *Lev Samoilovitch Bakst* (Leningrad, 1975), p. 162, original design illustrated and credited as being in the Serge Lifar Collection
Le Théâtre (Paris, September (II) 1912)

Bakst said of costume design: 'Tout sujet, tout modèle, toute partie du corps humain, qu'on dessine sans passion, sans un vif plaisir est une oeuvre stérile et fatalement fausse. La couleur doit exprimer une joie des yeux.'[1] This design is quintessential Bakst. It shows exactly why he was such an original designer for the theatre. The fluidity, the movement, the mixture of colours and the sureness of line except for the hands and the feet (Bakst was sometimes careless about drawing either) make a vivid but fanciful picture of the character in the part. It is also very erotic, but not entirely practical. The real bodice would not have been allowed to fly open to reveal that delicious breast.

It is easy to see why this image became very popular. It was made into a lithograph. Two editions were published, one of 100 during Bakst's lifetime and one of 50 after his death. Each copy was very carefully coloured by hand in more or less the same colours as the original. In this copy one main difference is in the colour of the scarf: the original is more of an orange brown. The other main difference between the lithograph and the original is in the inscription: the original has "Péri" (in quotation marks) and '(N.Trouhanova)' (the name in brackets).

Because the colouring has been done so well and because the number of the edition is almost invisible it has been thought for some time that this is the original design and it has been shown

Note
1 Quoted by Péladan in *L'Art Décoratif* XXV (Paris, June 1911), p. 297

PÉRI
BAKST

as such in the exhibitions mentioned above. The original design was exhibited in Paris at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, *Oeuvres de Léon Bakst* from 6 July to 15 October 1911 as no. 54.[2] The present whereabouts of the original design is not known.

For the 1911 season in Paris Diaghilev originally planned to present six new ballets: *Narcisse*, *Le Spectre de la Rose*, *La Péri*, *Le Dieu Bleu*, *Sadko* and *Petrushka*. The first four were to be designed by Bakst. At that time Bakst was also working for Ida Rubinstein who had started her own company. This fact annoyed Diaghilev because he assumed he had the exclusive right to use Bakst and also because he realised quite rightly that Bakst would not be able to fulfil everything he had planned. In the event, *Le Dieu Bleu* was postponed for a year (see also [4]).

The score for *La Péri* was commissioned by Diaghilev from Paul Dukas who wanted his mistress, Natasha Trouhanova, to dance the name part. But the production got into difficulties and Diaghilev at first tried to blame Bakst. 'As far as *Péri* is concerned the situation has become absolutely ridiculous, for we are in total ignorance of whether the action takes place in a palace, on a mountain top or in the clouds – and this is two weeks before the first night. Bakst claims that we lack confidence in his work, but I must say that I have never seen so astounding a betrayal of every artistic and aesthetic principle as he has always shown in his dealings with us. When Bakst took on the production of *St Sébastien*[3] he swore to me that it would in no way interfere with our work, which he held much dearer. Now I declare that we have been completely sacrificed to the work of Rubinstein and d'Annunzio.'[4] But the problem at that time was not so much the designs for *La Péri* as for *Le Dieu Bleu* for which Bakst had received no libretto. On 15(28) April 1911 Bakst writes from Paris to Diaghilev in Monte Carlo: 'I have sent you a sketch for *La Péri* on which I have drawn two costumes, but as I work on them I change them, as I change everything. But remember, when you receive the sketch, send it back to me within 3 hours so that I don't have, as now, to ask everybody – you, Shura [Benois], Fokine – 100 times to send me the *mise-en-scène* for *Dieu Bleu*.'[5] And by the beginning of May Bakst becomes even more worried about his work. He writes to his wife: '. . . I am terribly frightened by the amount of work I have to do and all the responsibility; I am afraid I won't have time to do it, that I'll do it badly because of the rush. And besides, neither Diaghilev nor d'Annunzio want to hear about replacing me. And Seriozha has also given me a new (wonderful music) ballet by Paul Duca [sic] – *La Péri*. Would you believe I go to bed at 10 o'clock to get up at $7\frac{1}{2}$ in the morning and work the whole day through until I am absolutely exhausted, to a thinness(!!). I go to bed completely beaten and several times a day I lose my courage, I want to leave it all and run away somewhere! Astruc[6] has surrounded me with five assistants – but think, over two months, I've got to design 8 acts! and make about 200 costume designs, and that's not counting the props . . .'[7]

In the end the production of *La Péri* did not take place because both Diaghilev and Fokine decided that Trouhanova was incapable of dancing the part. Dukas, highly offended, withdrew his score. But the plans for the ballet had been so far advanced that the two costume designs were published in the souvenir programme for the season, with the design for Nijinsky as Iskender on the cover.

Notes
2 When the Museum acquired the famous set design for *Schéhérazade*
3 *Le Martyre de St Sébastien* by Gabriele d'Annunzio produced by Ida Rubinstein at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, on 22 May 1911
4 Letter from Diaghilev to Astruc, the French impresario responsible for presenting both the Diaghilev and the Rubinstein seasons, dated 22 May 1911, in the Lincoln Center, Astruc Papers, quoted by Richard Buckle in *Diaghilev* (London, 1979), p.197
5 Letter dated 15(28) April 1911 (State Russian Museum, Leningrad)
6 See note 4 above
7 Letter dated 10(23) May 1911 (State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)

Le Dieu Bleu

Ballet in one act based on a Hindu legend by Jean Cocteau and Frédéric de Madrazo

Choreographer: Michel Fokine
Set and costumes: Léon Bakst
Composer: Reynaldo Hahn
Conductor: Désiré-Emile Inghelbrecht
Company: Les Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev

PRINCIPAL DANCERS
The Young Man: Max Frohman
The Young Girl: Tamara Karsavina
The Goddess: Lydia Nelidova
The Blue God: Vaslav Nijinsky
The Grand Priest: Michel Fedorov
The Drunken Bayadère: Bronislava Nijinska
Peacock carriers: Maria Piltz, Seraphine Astafieva, Liubov Tchernicheva

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, 13 May 1912

Synopsis
A young man is about to be made a priest. There are crowds, offerings, ceremonial ritual. Three women carry peacocks on their shoulders, others flowers and fruits in metal dishes. The young man is invested with the saffron robes of priesthood. After the investiture, the fiancée of the young man enters and appeals to him to renounce his religious vows. Her entreaties enrage the elders who thrust her into a dungeon to be devoured by curious monsters which come crawling in from hidden grottoes. She is overcome with terror and prays to the Blue God who suddenly appears and delivers the helpless girl into the hands of the stupefied priests. She is quickly restored to her lover and the Blue God of love and happiness disappears in radiant glory.

Léon Bakst

4 Design for the costume of a Pilgrim

Pencil, watercolour, gouache and silver paint (laid down)
28.2 × 22.8 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1911
Inscribed in pencil: '"Dieu Bleu"/Pélérin' (sic)

Provenance
Madame Stern, Paris
Comtesse St Juste
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 41

Exhibitions
Paris, Musée des Arts Dècoratifs, *Oeuvres de Léon Bakst*, 6 July–15 October 1911, no. 50

Literature
A *Les Ballets Russes*, souvenir programme, 1911 season, Paris, ill. (fig. 1)
Alexandre, Arsène, *The Decorative art of Léon Bakst* (London, 1913), ill. pl. 9
Levinson, André, *Bakst: the story of the artist's life* (Paris, 1923), ill. pl. XXII
B Davenay, Gaston, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 13 May 1912), p. 4
Brussell, Robert, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 14 May 1912), p. 5
Schneider, Louis, *Le Théâtre* (Paris, May (II) 1912)

Collections
COSTUME DESIGN
London, Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum

Diaghilev's plans for the June 1911 season proved to be over ambitious. Neither Fokine nor Bakst could possibly cope with so many new productions. Diaghilev only realised, however, by the end of May 1911 that *Le Dieu Bleu*, the grand and extravagant vehicle that he wanted for Nijinsky, would not be ready in time. Although the announcement of the new ballet was left out of the souvenir programme this design had already been printed in it. The production was postponed until 1912. But this design, one of three for *Le Dieu Bleu*,[1] was exhibited at Bakst's first one-man show at the end of 1911. This exhibition, organised by the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, devoted to the work of one theatre designer was the first of its kind and shows the measure of esteem that Bakst had gained. In his introduction to the catalogue Jean-Louis Vaudoyer says: 'En général, et fréquemment avec raison, on ne trouve pas nécessaire de disposer sur une cimaise les croquis hâtifs et parfois maladroits que le costumier éxécute pour des personnages condamnés à évoluer dans un décor conçu pour un seconde artiste souvent mal d'accord avec la premier. Chez les Russes, on ne peut point redouter ce défaut d'harmonie, car c'est toujours au même peintre que la maquette du décor et les dessins des costumes sont confiés . . . les décors russes sont . . . synthétiques.'[2]

In general, Vaudoyer's misgivings about exhibitions of theatre design are still true. Rows of costume and scene designs on the walls of galleries can quickly become very boring to look at. The purpose of a theatrical design is not for it to be seen paraded on a wall. Its purpose is only fulfilled when it is made into a set or a costume for a particular performer and seen in a theatre in conjunction with all the other sets and costumes for that particular production.

But Bakst's designs are never boring to look at. Sir Claude Phillips, reviewing an exhibition at The Fine Art Society in 1912 (see [5]), puts his finger on it: '. . . the greater number of the costume studies are for *Le Dieu Bleu* . . . and here M. Bakst's power of evocation, of suggesting

Notes
1 The other two designs were for the Blue God and for the Rajah
2 Vaudoyer, Jean-Louis, *Léon Bakst*, introduction to exhibition catalogue, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1911

BAKST

1 Costume design for a pilgrim by Bakst, dated 1912. Reproduced in souvenir programme of US tour 1916. (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

the human element, the whole atmosphere, through the costume, is triumphant. He not only clothes, but veritably creates, these uncanny, disquieting creatures, in whose beauty there is an element of terror, of hatred as well as of love.'[3]

This design was presumably bought at the exhibition in 1911[4] because Bakst made another similar design for the Pilgrim dated 1912 (fig. 1). At first glance the two designs appear to be almost exactly the same but the 1912 design is not quite so elegant, not so delicate, not so firm. The bend of the wrist, the swing of the bracelet, the angle of the head, the curve of the body, the placing of the feet and the shape of the staff have been accentuated to make the whole drawing weaker. Having second thoughts did not improve it. The 1911 design remains one of the great masterpieces. Neither of these designs was exhibited at The Fine Art Society.

In the spring of 1911 Bakst was, as we have seen,[5] frantically busy preparing a number of new productions for Diaghilev. In a long letter[6] to Diaghilev he both complains and explains about his method of working. He complains that he has still not received the libretto for *Le Dieu Bleu*: '. . . without which I am not prepared to do any more work. Apart from a few arbitrary and vague instructions which you gave me when the priority was to work on *Thamar* and *Après-midi d'un Faune*, I have received nothing – no libretto, no number of characters, nor number of scenes, no definite budget, no cast list.' And he goes on to explain his method of working; 'I repeat (but I may as well be singing to the wind) that the essence of my *mise-en-scène* is the result of placing, in the most calculated way, spots on the background of the setting and the costume directly corresponding to the build of the artist. Even so, I am doing a lot on *Le Dieu Bleu*, but blind, not knowing what stripe of colour will come out of it. It's terrible. Again, I earnestly and urgently ask you to send me the *mise-en-scène* for *Le Dieu Bleu*, the number of characters, how many in each costume, and the names of the artists according to the libretto, the libretto itself, the number – exactly worked out, in full, the fixed number of monsters etc. Fokine with Shura [Benois] and you can work it out, but as I have already told you more than

Notes
3 *The Daily Telegraph* (London, 20 June 1912)
4 When the Musée des Arts Décoratifs acquired the set design for *Schéhérazade*, the first work by Bakst to be acquired by a Western museum
5 See [3]
6 Letter dated 15(28) April 1911 (State Russian Museum, Leningrad)

once I cannot design the settings in one country and travel to another to help with the *mise-en-scène*, and to a third to do the lighting and make adjustments to the scenery. *C'est trop fort.* Every second here is dear to me, and you should know from my parcels of *Rose* and *Narcisse* how conscientiously and honestly I concern myself with the productions and that I can be trusted more than a little, especially as every artist can only work in the manner and style which is characteristic of him. Once again I remind you that Muelle[7] needs the exact measurements of the artists, those who have not been cast as well as those who have, and most important, the shoe sizes for Crait. Once again I ask you to send me without delay the *mise-en-scène* for *Le Dieu Bleu* because I cannot work in *l'incertitude*. This will have fatal consequences on the work. Ask Serov, he'll tell you, how much I am working for you – and for this reason I ask you to help me a little, and not to sit back with indifference to what I am doing here. After all, it's for you. Once again I repeat, that the costumes of the main characters appear dominant, and like flowers on the bouquet of the other costumes. . . .'

Bakst blamed Diaghilev and Diaghilev blamed Bakst, but dropping *Le Dieu Bleu* did not affect the success of the 1911 season. There were still four new productions: *Narcisse*, *Le Spectre de la Rose*, *Sadko* and *Petrushka*. But when *Le Dieu Bleu* was produced in 1912 it was not the success that Diaghilev had hoped for. The postponement had somehow taken the fire out of it. It was all too much for too little. Although Bakst's work was generally praised, the choreography of Fokine, influenced by Siamese dancing[8] was too alien to be appreciated. Even Nijinsky, as the Blue God, could not achieve the miracle that Diaghilev wanted. *Le Dieu Bleu* was performed in London[9] as well as in Paris but never revived.

Notes
7 The Parisian costumier who made most of the costumes for the Ballets Russes
8 A troupe of Siamese dancers had visited St Petersburg
9 First performance on 27 February 1913 at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

2 Double page spread of costumes for secondary characters in Le Dieu Bleu from the souvenir programme. Left to right: Nègre, Sacrificateurs, Prêtres, Le Grande Prêtre, Bayadère, Servantes du Temple, Les Petites Divinités, Bayadère (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Léon Bakst

5 Design for the costume of four beggar women

Pencil, watercolour, gouache, gold and silver paint (laid down)
28.2 × 19.8 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1911
Inscribed in pencil: '"Dieu Bleu"/4 femmes mendiantes'

Provenance
Mrs J.M. Storey, Southsea, England
Arthur Tooth & Sons, London
Sotheby's, London, 18 July 1968, lot 33
E.Stacy-Marks Ltd., Eastbourne, England
Mrs H. Saltzman
Sotheby's, London, 30 May 1974, lot 15

Exhibitions
(?) London, Fine Art Society, *Léon Bakst*, 1912, no. 98
Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, *Ballets Russes de Diaghilew 1909 à 1929*, April–May 1939, no. 33

Literature
B Phillips, Sir Claude, *The Daily Telegraph* (London, 20 June 1912)

In the exhibition at The Fine Art Society in London in 1912 there were 141 exhibits with twenty-eight designs from *Le Dieu Bleu*. No. 98 is described as 'Beggar Woman' and is the only one that could have been this design.

It is a more casual drawing than that for the Pilgrim [4], more of a sketch. But then the costume is very simple. Even so, every detail is there, quite clear, for the costumier, for the make-up (the tattooing on the arm) and the property master (the metal begging bowl). And it is full of character. Only Bakst could not resist drawing the breasts bulging below the brassiere.

A copy of this drawing (but twice the size) was sold in New York at the Parke-Bernet Galleries on 6 May 1970 as lot 17. It has a stamped signature and it was sold as being 'of the period of the artist which may be wholly or in part his work or a work by the atelier assistance.' They were right and, in this case, I am sure it was the work of an assistant.

Léon Bakst

6 Design for the costume of two boys carrying a sieve

Pencil, watercolour, gouache, gold and silver paint (laid down)
28.3 × 22.2 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1911
Inscribed in pencil: '"Dieu Bleu"/2 garçons portant/une passoir'

Provenance
Sotheby's, Monte Carlo, 26 June 1976, lot 719

White is the most difficult colour to use on stage but Bakst used it in *Le Dieu Bleu* entirely successfully as the dominant colour for the servants of the temple. White against black bodies, white with delicate geometric patterns of blue, black and gold as here, or green, red and blue as for the Pilgrim [4].

This is a variation on a number of similar costumes which Bakst designed for this production. Again, it is a quick sketch. The arms and hands are not well defined and were probably painted by an assistant. Bakst also had second thoughts about the head dress, which may also have been done first by an assistant, by using white paint to blot out the first idea. But the pose is Bakst. Only he would give a minor character such a great sense of movement with the position of the left leg behind the transparent skirt and the right foot on tip toe.

„DIEU BLEU"
2 garçons
une
Bakst
1911

Léon Bakst

7 Drawing of a Bayadère's costume

Pencil, watercolour, gouache, gold and silver paint
29.7 × 19 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Undated
Inscribed on verso: 'Costume pour le Dieu Bleu représentant une femme en jupon bleu vert or avec jupon superposé rouge rose argent No 7056'
Signed on verso: 'G. Rasamatt'
Stamped on verso: 'GR'/'G Rasamatt/Dépositaire Exclusif/des oeuvres de Léon Bakst'

Provenance
Henri Chauvier, Paris
Sotheby's, Monte Carlo, 26 June 1976, lot 720

Literature
A Réau, Louis, Roche, Denis, Svietlov, V. and Tessier, A., *Inedited Works of Bakst* (New York, 1927), ill. pl. xiv
Einstein, Carl, *Léon Bakst* (Berlin, 1928), ill. no. 38
These illustrations were hand-coloured after printing and therefore the colouring differs slightly from the original

This is not a design for a costume for *Le Dieu Bleu* but a drawing made later. The signature shows that it was made after 1920 (see p.239) but it has been included here out of chronological sequence because it relates very closely to an original design for *Le Dieu Bleu*: the Bayadère with a peacock illustrated (fig. 1) in black and white.[1] This figure, without a peacock on the shoulder, is a mirror image of the other but about half the size. The arrangement of the clothes on both is the same. Only the patterns and the colours are different. The figure with the peacock has a white shawl and an apron with blue and gold spots, and a pink skirt with silver spots. The jewellery, except for the ring in the nose, is the same.

It was not unusual for Bakst to repeat a drawing either directly or as a mirror image (see also *Judith* [17]). It was not laziness that made him do this. When Bakst worked on a production he never used a 'standard' figure endlessly repeated, only changing the cut and colour of the costume. He always visualised the whole character however small the part and so he did hundreds of different drawings for each production as well as many preliminary sketches. Inevitably there are similarities between some of the designs, as after all, there is a limit to the number of variations any one artist can produce when working at extreme pressure. But, for one reason or another, some of Bakst's designs became more popular than others and so he would repeat them. This drawing was probably made specially for reproduction or for exhibition. It is a meticulous piece of work. Although parts of the drawing – the anklets, the waistband and most of the head dress – have been deliberately left unpainted, Bakst has taken particular care

Note
1 In the collection of Mr and Mrs Nikita D. Lobanov-Rostovsky

BAKST

1 Costume design for '3 Baïadères avec Paon' in Le Dieu Bleu, 1911. Reproduced in Arsène Alexandre, The Decorative Art of Léon Bakst (London, 1913), pl. 2 (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

with the drawing of the face, the shading of the navel and the bulging stomach, and the application of the silver paint. It is wonderfully seductive. And a bit vulgar. No wonder he was asked to do it again.

G. Rasamatt, whose stamp is on the verso of this design, was an agent who is reputed to have appropriated all the drawings and designs that were left in Bakst's studio after his death in 1924.

Hélène de Sparte

Tragedy in four acts by Emile Verhaeren

Director: Alexandre Sanine
Sets and costumes: Léon Bakst
Composer: Déodat de Sévérac
Conductor: Louis Hasselmans
Company: Ida Rubinstein

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
Helen: Ida Rubinstein
Electra: Véra Sergine
Pollux: Edouard de Max
Menelaus: Desjardins
Castor: Roger Karl
Zeus: Dorival

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, 4 May 1912

Synopsis
After the capture of Troy, Helen returns to Sparta with Menelaus. She thinks that her days as the spark of love and passion are over and all she wants to do is to live a life of peace with her husband. But her fate pursues her. That beauty which unleashed the war between the Greeks and the Trojans continues to arouse uncontrollable passions. Disaster follows upon disaster. In love with his sister, Helen's brother, Castor, kills Menelaus. To avenge him, his niece Electra kills Castor. Only Pollux, Helen's other brother, is able to find the peace that he seeks. He tries to persuade Helen to forget Menelaus and to suggest that they rule together. But Helen refuses and escapes to the valleys, the hills and forests where fauns, nymphs, and satyrs pay hommage to her. She despairs of ever finding peace and implores her father, Zeus, to help her die. But Zeus carries her up to the heavens to be beside him where she does not die but becomes immortal.

Léon Bakst

8 Design for Ida Rubinstein's costume for Act IV

Pencil, watercolour and silver paint (laid down)
27 × 19.6 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1912
Inscribed in pencil: 'Hélène de Sparte/"Mme Rubinstein"/IV acte'
Inscribed on verso on card: 'Placer cette aquarelle sous ce verre et cadre, ne pas même changer du carton, rien que pour avoir celle-la sous verre; et renvoyez l'autre en la mettant dans du papier. Livrez à Mr Lallemond de suite il l'attendra.'

Provenance
Ida Rubinstein
N. Manoukian, Paris
C.J. Gridley, London
Sotheby's, London, 9 July 1969, lot 6
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 13

Exhibitions
Brussels, Palais des Beaux Arts, *Art Russe Ancien et Moderne*, April–June 1928, no. 527
London, Fine Art Society, *Bakst*, 3 December–4 January 1974, no. 31

Literature
A Spencer, Charles, *Léon Bakst* (London, 1973), ill. no. 126, p. 139
B de Flers, Robert, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 6 May 1912)
Gaitier, Joseph, *Excelsior* (Paris, 6 May 1912)
L'Illustration (Paris, 11 May 1912)
Schneider, Louis, *Le Théâtre* (Paris, May (II), 1912)
Duquesnel, Félix, *Le Théâtre* (Paris, May (II), 1912)

Collections
SET DESIGN
Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs
COSTUME DESIGNS
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum

During 1911 and 1912 Bakst designed eleven productions, costumes for several individual artists, a number of sets as well as his 'fantasies on modern costume'.[1] Stravinsky wrote to Benois: 'So many commissions should not be given to Bakst alone (however talented he is). Why ruin the artist and his work? It is enough to say that during just one month he has put on three Greek productions which include 6 settings (*Hélène de Sparte* (3), the *Faun* (1), *Daphnis and Chloe* (2)).'[2] Stravinsky does not say that more than a hundred costumes were needed for these productions. In order to get through the work Bakst devised a kind of formula for a number of the costumes, a 'short-hand' of a particular pose which he used several times in all three productions (figs 1 and 2). But even so they are not identical. Each design retains its individuality. And the colour scheme and the patterns are different for each production.[3] The colour in all these three 'Greek' productions is now quite different from the colours he had used for his classical Greek plays before. The colours have the intensity and luminosity which he discovered on his visit to Greece with Serov in 1907. Bakst now did not design according to his idea of classical Greece but according to what he had seen for himself. But he was criticised for it: '. . .

Notes
1 See Chronology for the list of productions
2 Letter from Stravinsky to Benois dated 8 June 1912 quoted by Pruzhan, Irina N. in *Lev Samoilovitch Bakst* (Leningrad, 1975), p. 170
3 There are, however, photographs which show that Diaghilev later interchanged some of the costumes of *Daphnis and Chloe* with *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*

HÉLÈNE DE SPARTE
"Mme RUBINSTEIN"
IVOLTE
BAKST
1912

1 Costume design for L'Après-Midi d'un Faune, 1912. Reproduced in Arsène Alexandre, The Decorative Art of Léon Bakst (London, 1913), pl.15 (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

2 Costume design for Daphnis and Chloe, 1912. Reproduced in Arsène Alexandre, The Decorative Art of Léon Bakst (London, 1913), pl. 58 (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

peut-être ce cadre est-il établi d'après toutes sortes de documents authentiques. Mais il s'accommode malaisément de l'idée que nous conservons pieusement de plus harmonieux des peuples.'[4] The reality was not this critic's idea of Greece either but he does admit that 'cet ensemble a je ne sais quoi de somptueusement barbare, qui est le dernier mot de raffinement.'[5] Bakst is never over the top. Coarse and vulgar extravagance is always restrained by the hand of good taste. This design is also most carefully drawn and painted and is a portrait of Ida Rubinstein. As it was in her possession from an early date it was presumably given to her by the artist, but, as is clear from the inscription, as a replacement for another drawing.

Notes
4 de Flers, Robert, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 6 May 1912), p. 5
5 *Ibid.*

LA GRANDE SAISON DE PARIS

M^ME IDA RUBINSTEIN

3 Ida Rubinstein. Photograph by Otto, reproduced in Le Théâtre (Paris, May 1912)
(National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Léon Bakst

9 Fantasy on modern costume: Atalanta

Pencil, watercolour and silver paint
45.2 × 28.4 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1912

This dress and other 'fantasies on modern costume' designed by Bakst were first shown by Madame Paquin, rue de la Paix, Paris during the first week of April 1913. The hats were made by Camille-Roger, the shoes by Hellstern.

Provenance
Mrs Emile Mond, London
Sotheby's, London, 10 June 1942, lot 22
Willoughby Norman, London
Sotheby's, London, 13 December 1980, lot 55
Sotheby's, London, 4 March 1982, lot 38
Galerie du Lac, Vevey, Switzerland

Exhibitions
London, Fine Art Society, *Léon Bakst*, June–July 1913, no. 101
London, Claridge Gallery, *The Russian Ballet*, March 1930
London, 1 Belgrave Square, *Russian Art*, 4 June–13 July 1935, no. 758
Edinburgh, Fine Art Society, *Bakst*, 21 August–11 September 1976, no. 106
(This exhibition was also shown in London, Fine Art Society, 16 September–9 October 1976)

Literature
A Siordet, Gerald C., 'Léon Bakst's designs for scenery and costume', *The Studio* LX no. 347 (London, October 1913), ill. p. 4
Spencer, Charles, *Léon Bakst* (London, 1973), ill. no. 173
B *Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, 20 February 1913)
Comoedia Illustré (Paris, 5 March 1913)
Comoedia Illustré (Paris, 20 March 1913)
Mourey, Gabriel, 'Les Robes de Bakst', *Gazette du Bon Ton*, no. 6, (Paris, April 1913)
Comoedia Illustré, 'Les Robes Modernes de Bakst chez Paquin' (Paris, 5 April 1913)
Comoedia Illustré, 'Trois Chapeaux de Léon Bakst' (Paris, 20 April 1913)
Comoedia Illustré (Paris, 5 May 1913)
Vogue (New York, 15 November 1914)
L'Illustration (Paris, 3 January 1925)

After the *succès fou* of *Schéhérazade* everyone in society in Paris had to have her own 'Schéhérazade' dress. Bakst's 'oriental' influence extended beyond the couture houses to interior design and 'orientalism' in every form became immensely fashionable. One of the *couturiers* who adopted the 'oriental' look was Paul Poiret. He denied, however, that he had been influenced by Bakst saying that he had first become aware of the possibility in fashion of the 'oriental' style after visiting the Victoria and Albert Museum. Bakst never worked for Poiret.

It was Madame Paquin who commissioned Bakst at the same time as she commissioned another painter Paul Iribe. She herself was not a designer but her house at this time was making the 'costumes' for a lot of the actresses performing in contemporary plays in Paris. So it was a natural, though possibly risky thing to do, to ask Bakst, the most famous theatre designer of the time, to design some contemporary clothes. It happened to be Bakst's dream. 'La robe, mais c'est mon rêve le plus cher! . . . Car, en dépit de mes nombreuses productions au théâtre,

BAKST
1912

je crée chaque matin à mon réveil une ou plusieurs robes, dont je pare à plaisir en imagination et souvent en réalité les femmes élégantes aux belles lignes. Vous me trouvez tout préparé à des créations de ce genre: cependant il faut habiteur l'oeil aux idées nouvelles, progressivement, et c'est ce que je m'efforcerai d'observer dans mes premières aquarelles.'[1]

Dancers have to move freely. Their bodies cannot be bundled into tight corsets. The influence of dance costume had already begun to be felt in the fashion houses of Paris and a new freedom was being given to the female body. 'Pour favoriser à la silhouette ces attitudes charmantes, nos corsets sont des maillots aux souples mailles, nos corsages remontent légèrement à la taille. La femme est, dès lors, une tige qui s'infléchit dans tous ses gestes, se courbe, se penche, s'alanguit.'[2] So Bakst, developing his own ideas about the freedom of dancers' bodies, invented during 1912 a number of 'fantasies on modern dress' for Madame Paquin which are delicate, charming and totally seductive. 'Les robes de 'Bakst' qu'a réalisées Paquin sont extrèmement feminines. . . . Elles permettent mieux que toute autre, à la femme, de faire valoir la grace, l'eurythmie de ses mouvements.'[3] Bakst did not follow his 'oriental' style in these inventions but tended to use colours, patterns and materials similar to the ones he had used for his 'Greek' ballets like *Narcisse* and *Daphnis and Chloe*. He even named these drawings after Greek mythology: Aglaia, Alcyone, Dione, Hebe, Isis, Nike and Atalanta.

Notes
1 Bakst, Léon, quoted in *Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, 20 February 1913)
2 *Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, 5 May 1913), p. 726
3 *Ibid.*

1 Double page spread of dresses designed by Bakst and made by Paquin, drawn by Paul Meras. Atalanta is third from the left: the drawing is not very accurate and she has lost her sexy charm. Reproduced in Comoedia Illustré (Paris, 5 May 1913) (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

2 Mlle Germaine Bailac of the Opéra and Opéra Comique wearing a dress designed by Bakst (third from the right in fig. 1). Photograph by Félix, reproduced from an unidentified cutting in the William Beaumont Morris Scrapbooks (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Although the drawings are some of the most enchanting that Bakst ever made, the dresses, when realised, were not so successful. *Atalanta* is described: 'Tunique néo-grecque en crêpe de Chine noir, sur grand volant plissé, dentelle blanche; sur les côtes, bandes crêpe de Chine blanc, ornées boutons rouges; fines broderies de perles bois rouge. Ceinture haute, camées-émaux, manches crêpe de Chine blanc.'[4] But the critics carped. '. . . Mais je dis aussi que je trouve parfois excessif l'usage que fait M. Bakst des ornements géometriques et des couleurs tranchées et que je regrette de le voir parfois se laisser entraîner par son goût du "jamais vu" à des recherches un peu trop étranges, comme les applications d'étoffes ou d'autre matière épaisses et pesantes sur des tissus légers . . .'[5] Even more dismissive was *Vogue*: 'No one denies that Iribe and Bakst are splendid artists, but neither of them really understands how to dress a twentieth century woman. They have much to contribute to modern dress, but that their ideas can not be translated direct from sketch to gown was proved by the failure of Mme. Paquin, who, if any dressmaker could, should have been able to do so successfully.'[6]

Atalanta, the virgin huntress, always armed with a bow and arrow, was the swiftest mortal alive and would only agree to marry someone who could beat her in a race. She killed anyone who lost against her. Many suitors lost their lives but eventually Melanion, by dropping apples during the race which Atalanta was tempted to pick up, just beat her to the winning post.

The telephone the girl is holding (symbol of Atalanta's bow?) is the so-called 'spoon' type designed in about 1890 by the German firm of Siemens and Halske. The button the girl is pushing with her forefinger was used for signalling to the exchange at the beginning or at the end of a call.[7]

Twelve of these 'fantasies' were exhibited in Chicago in 1914 but not this one. It had been bought by Mrs Mond the year before from The Fine Art Society.[8] Although noted in the catalogue as 'carried out by Paquin' I have not been able to find a photograph of anyone wearing the actual dress.

Notes
4 *Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, 20 March 1913)
5 Mourey, Gabriel, *Gazette du Bon Ton* (Paris, April 1913)
6 *Vogue* (New York, 15 November 1914), p. 53
7 Information given by Keith Geddes, Science Museum, London
8 Information given by Peyton Skipwith, The Fine Art Society

La Pisanelle ou La Mort Parfumée

Comedy in a prologue and three acts by Gabriele d'Annunzio

Director: Vsevolod Meyerhold
Choreographer: Michel Fokine
Sets and costumes: Léon Bakst
Composer: Ildebrando da Parma
Conductor: Désiré-Emile Inghelbrecht
Company: Ida Rubinstein

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
The Prince of Tyre: Edouard de Max
The Bailiff of Venice: Mendaille
The Queen: Suzanne Munte
Sire Huguet: Hervé
Maître Ancel: Desfontaines
Psillude the Cretan: Puylagarde
La Pisanelle: Ida Rubinstein

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, 11 June 1913

Synopsis
The scene is Cyprus under French domination by the Princes of Lusignan whose castle was built by the fairy Mélusine.
PROLOGUE The King holds court and, with his uncle and mother, listens to a dispute between Greek and Catholic bishops who want him to marry a rich and Christian princess. But the King is fascinated by the legend of the beautiful woman with a magic ring on her finger. He goes in search of her because it is she that he wants to marry.
ACT I A pirate ship has arrived at the port of Famagusta. In the cargo is a woman whom everyone desires. After she is auctioned the successful bidder dies. The King arrives and recognises her to be the Pisanella, the woman with the magic ring. He takes her away.
ACT II She becomes the *beata* in a convent. But her evil influence continues to have tragic consequences. The King's uncle comes to the convent with his warriors to abduct her. The King arrives in time and kills his uncle.
ACT III The Queen Mother, wants to free her son from the fate of Pisanella. She entices her to the palace and during an orgy of dancing and singing she suffocates her under a mass of blood red roses.

Léon Bakst

10 Design for Mlle Soulayrès' costume as La Fée Mélusine in the Prologue

Pencil, watercolour, gold and silver paint
36 · 26.3 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Undated
Inscribed in pencil: 'Pisanella Prologue/la fée Melousine/l costumes'
Inscribed on verso in pencil: 'SS 256 Série B Pisanella'

Provenance
The estate of the artist
Nikita Lobanov-Rostovsky
Sotheby's, New York, 6 December 1979, lot 38
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 74

Literature
B Kraemer-Taylor, Pierre, *Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, 5 June 1913)
Comoedia (Paris, 13 June 1913)
de Flers, Robert, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 12 June 1913)
d'Annunzio, Gabriele, *La Revue de Paris* (Paris, 15 June 1913)
Georges-Michel, Michel, *Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, 20 June 1913)
Casalonga, *ibid.*
Levinson, André, *Rech* (St Petersburg, 8(21) July 1913)
Duquesnel, Félix, *Le Théâtre*, no. 348 (Paris, June (II) 1913)
Aubry, Raoul, *Le Théâtre*, no. 349 (Paris, July (I) 1913)
Pann, E., *Maski*, no. 7–8 (St Petersburg, 1912–13)

This design appears to be uncharacteristic of the artist. Compared with the previous drawing of Atalanta this is Bakst at his most free. Yet it has his inimitable quality – the seductive look in the eyes.

D'Annunzio always wrote careful and detailed descriptions of the settings and costumes for his plays but not so precise as to leave nothing to the imagination of the designer. The description of the appearance of Mélusine in the Prologue is: '. . . et on apperçoit la fée de Lusignan en forme de femme nue jusqu'au nombril et, du nombril en bas, transmuée en un très long serpent à divers plis et replis, qui se déroule et s'agite. . . .' The character appears only for a few seconds and it is not clear how the costume worked on stage. This design, although only a sketch, gave enough information to the costumier and Bakst was obviously satisfied with it for its purpose. He had to do over a hundred costume designs for this production.

Most of Bakst's designs go through many stages of development. He was always sketching his ideas on any scrap of paper he could find, on postcards, on hotel writing paper, on the proverbial backs of envelopes. Making a design for the costumier was one thing but making a design for reproduction or for exhibition was quite another. Bakst was very conscious of his prestige and fame. He would never have allowed this design to be either published or exhibited.

La Pisanelle ou La Mort Parfumée was the third annual gala production which Bakst designed for Ida Rubinstein. These gala evenings, and Diaghilev's Ballets Russes seasons taking place at the same time, were the high spots of the Parisian theatrical calendar. They became exaggerated occasions and to some extent objective and sensible appreciation deserted many of the critics. The power of gossip and the media, through newspapers and magazines, was very strong even then. Ida Rubinstein became a fashionable craze. She was mysterious and beautiful in a Jewish-Oriental way and she had talent as a dancer. She was also rich. After her sensational success dancing Cleopatra for Diaghilev in Paris in 1909 she formed her own company. She had the intelligence and the talent to surround herself with the best actors and actresses, the most

Pisanella Prologue
La fée Melousine
Costume

1

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3

1 *Edouard de Max as the Prince of Tyre in La Pisanelle. Photograph by Walery, reproduced in Le Théâtre (Paris, July 1913) (National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

2 *Suzanne Munte as the Queen in La Pisanelle. Photograph by Walery, reproduced in Le Théâtre (Paris, July 1913) (National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

3 *Set design of the Prologue of La Pisanelle. Reproduced in Comoedia Illustré (Paris, 20 June 1913) (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

inventive directors and the most famous designer of the day. Her productions could not fail. No one minded very much that Rubinstein's talent as an actress was marred by her speaking French with a strong Russian accent. Audiences came to gawp and they were delighted by what they saw. Bakst was an equal star. 'Chaque décor a été applaudi dès le lever du rideau et une salle emballée a souligné avec applaudissements enthousiastes la magie de la chaude palette du décorateur et du costumier.'[1] All the critics were unanimous in praising Bakst. The Paris correspondent of *Rech*, André Levinson, sums up the general view: 'There is no doubt that the scenery and costumes for d'Annunzio's play are one of the highest achievements of Léon Bakst as a theatrical designer.'[2]

Notes

1 de Champelos, G. Davin, writing after the *répétition générale*, from an unidentified newspaper cutting dated 12 June 1913 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)

2 Levinson, André, *Rech* (St Petersburg, 8(21) July 1913), p. 2

Sadko

Opera in seven scenes (three or five acts) by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Libretto: The composer and Vladimir Bielsky
Costumes: Léon Bakst (there is no record of his having designed any sets)

The production was planned for the Théâtre national de l'Opéra, Paris, 1917 but did not take place

Synopsis
The story is based on a Russian folk legend of the Novgorod cycle.
SCENE 1 During a banquet Nejeta, a minstrel from Kiev, sings of the glories of Novgorod and is much applauded by the assembled company of Merchants. Sadko, a poor minstrel of the people, reproaches them for their love of luxury which has sapped their spirit of adventure. His reproaches are resented and he is expelled from the banquet.
SCENE 2 Sadko is wandering by a lake. His song attracts the beautiful Princess Volkhova, the youngest daughter of the Sea King, who falls in love with him. She promises him that when he casts his net into the lake he will catch golden fish and with the gold he will find his heart's desire.
SCENE 3 Lubava, Sadko's wife, is afraid and worried that he has left her.
SCENE 4 Sadko, by the harbour, wagers his head against the wealth of the Merchants that he will catch a golden fish. He does so and becomes a hero. Three visitors from abroad, a Viking, a Hindu and a Venetian, describe the wonders of their countries. After distributing his winnings to the poor, Sadko sets sail for Venice in search of adventure and the ideal of his dreams.
SCENE 5 Sadko is becalmed. The Sea King is tempted with gold and precious stones but to no avail. The Sea demands a human sacrifice. Sadko guesses that Princess Volkhova has planned this and he accepts his fate. He is cast off on a plank with his instrument, the *guslee* (a kind of zither).
SCENE 6 The wedding feast under the sea. During the feast there is such excitement that on the surface of the sea many ships are wrecked. St Nicholas appears, stops the dance and orders Sadko to return home.
SCENE 7 Sadko and Princess Volkhova take leave of each other by the shores of the lake. The Sea Princess was only a dream. She vanishes and becomes the River Volkhov which flows past Novgorod. Lubava welcomes her husband. His friends receive him like a hero and sing his praises. But Sadko gives glory to St Nicholas and bids them all to pray for Novgorod.

Léon Bakst

11 Design for the costume of one of the chorus in scene 7: The shore of Lake Ilmen at dawn

Pencil and watercolour (on card)
44.9 × 22.4 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1917
Inscribed on verso on label: '46 LB/"sadko"'

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 13 March 1980, lot 225a
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 78

Exhibitions
(?) London, Fine Art Society, *Léon Bakst Memorial Exhibition*, May 1927

Collections
COSTUME DESIGNS
Baltimore, Maryland, Evergreen House Foundation

Although this is a design for an un-named character, just one of the chorus, one of the crowd, although it could not be more plain or less glamorous, Bakst has taken great care with the drawing. The centre of gravity, with the left hand tightly gripping the stick and the right hand pressing on the forearm, marks the weight of the figure, with its slight stoop, perfectly balanced between the feet and the angled stick. The character is revealed, and not concealed, by the vacant stare. The drawing of the folds of the loose fitting coat accentuates the muscular tension of the old man underneath. But the coat is not the important part of the costume. In a crowd on stage it would merge with the others and Bakst obviously wanted a general effect of certain rather drab colours. His instinct, however, could not make him resist adding the blue round the cuffs and the hem of the coat. But the head dress would not be lost on stage. That is what gives individuality to the character. The fur trim and the blue and white pattern would be clearly identifiable on stage. The crowd would be a crowd of individuals and not, as is usual, a chorus of clones.

During the early part of 1917 Bakst also designed for Diaghilev *Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur* which was first performed in Rome.[1] Diaghilev had also commissioned Picasso to design *Parade*.[2] This was his first work for the theatre and it was in his cubist style. Bakst tried very hard to understand and to like cubism and the futurist painters whose work he saw in Italy. But he remained unsympathetic to both even though he tried to imitate the style. The décor for *Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur* was: 'a Venice seen as if distorted in a glass paper-weight. Violent colour-scheme – plaster and zinc – dazzling white lighting from the side at floor level, bulging houses, a stormy sky.'[3] Also a number of the extant designs for *Sadko* are done in Bakst's personal 'cubism'. They are not successful as cubist drawings but their bold, angular and rather crude lines and colours make them unique in Bakst's work. But he cannot have been satisfied with them because he never continued or repeated the experiment (fig. 1).

Rimsky-Korsakov was very attracted by the subject of *Sadko* and wrote a symphonic poem in 1867. It is this score which was used for the ballet presented by Diaghilev in Paris in 1911.[4]

Notes

1 Ballet in one act adapted from Goldoni's play *Le Donne di Buon 'umore*, music by Scarlatti orchestrated by Tommasini with choreography by Leonide Massine first performed on 12 April 1917 at the Teatro Costanzi, Rome

2 Ballet in one act by Jean Cocteau with music by Erik Satie and choreography by Leonide Massine first performed on 18 May 1917 at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris

3 Morand, Paul, *Journal d'un attaché d'ambassade, 1916–17* (Paris, 1949), quoted by Richard Buckle in *Diaghilev* (London, 1979), p. 329

4 *Sadko* with libretto by Adolf Bolm, scenery and costumes by Boris Anisfeld, choreography by Michel Fokine first performed 6 June 1911 at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris. Revived by Diaghilev with choreography by Adolf Bolm and scenery and costumes by Nathalie Gontcharova in New York in 1916

1 Costume design for six sea urchins in Sadko

The opera, using a few motifs from the symphonic poem, was composed during 1895–96. The censor objected to the introduction of St Nicholas, the patron saint of Russia, and refused permission for it to be performed publicly. It was first performed in the private Solodovnikov Theatre in Moscow on 26 December 1897 (7 January 1898). The authorities relented and the opera was staged at the Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg in January 1901.

The Sleeping Princess

Ballet in five scenes after the story by Perrault

Composer: Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, with the Prelude to scene 3, the symphonic interlude 'The Dream' and *Aurora's Variation* in scene 3 orchestrated by Igor Stravinsky
Choreographer: Marius Petipa, reproduced by Nicholas Sergueieff, with choreography for the action scenes, *Hunting Dances* in scene 3, *Aurora's Variation* in the same scene, and *Tales of Bluebeard, Schéhérazade* and *Innocent Ivan* by Bronislava Nijinska
Sets and costumes: Léon Bakst
Conductor: Gregor Fitelberg
Company: Les Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev

PRINCIPAL DANCERS
King Florestan XXIV: Leonard Treer
The Queen: Vera Sudeikina
Cantalabutte, Master of Ceremonies: Jean Jazwinsky
The Princess Aurora: Lubov Egorova
The Lilac Fairy: Bronislava Nijinska
The Wicked Fairy: Carlotta Brianza
The Countess: Lubov Tchernicheva
Prince Charming: Pierre Vladimiroff
Gallisson, the Prince's Tutor: Nicolas Zvereff

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Alhambra Theatre, London, 2 November 1921

Synopsis

SCENE 1 The Royal Palace of King Florestan XXIV during the christening of Princess Aurora. All the fairies have been invited to be present as godmothers. Each has a special present for the baby. Just as everybody is rejoicing a page rushes on to announce the arrival of the Wicked Fairy, Carabosse, whom the Master of Ceremonies has forgotten to invite. The Wicked Fairy arrives in her chariot drawn by six rats and, refusing to accept any apology, insists on seeing the baby. She prophesies that one day the child will prick her finger on a spindle and that on that day she will die. But the Lilac Fairy, who still has to give her present to the baby, promises that she will not die but fall into a sleep until a Prince comes to wake her with a kiss.
SCENE 2 After sixteen years Aurora has grown into a beautiful girl. The King and Queen prepare festivities in honour of the Princes who have come to woo Aurora. The villagers are also invited and, to his horror, the Master of Ceremonies sees that some of them have come with spindles in spite of a law which prohibits them. An old woman approaches Aurora and shows her a spindle. While she examines it she pricks her finger. The old woman reveals herself as the Wicked Fairy and vanishes. But the Lilac Fairy appears and with a wave of her wand everyone falls into deep slumber and an impenetrable forest grows round the palace.
SCENE 3 Twenty years later Florimond, known as Prince Charming is hunting in the forest. He becomes separated from his companions and rests beneath a tree. The Lilac Fairy appears and shows him Aurora in a vision. Prince Charming implores the fairy to lead him to her and, out of compassion, she invites him to step into her fairy boat which is made of mother-of-pearl.
SCENE 4 The Lilac Fairy leads Prince Charming into the palace where the King is sleeping at the foot of Aurora's bed. Prince Charming tiptoes to her side and wakes her with a kiss breaking the spell. There is great rejoicing and the King and Queen bestow the hand of their beautiful daughter upon the Prince.
SCENE 5 The wedding. Characters from the fairy tales arrive and dance and pay their respects to the bride and groom. The whole assembly joins in a great dance in their honour.

Léon Bakst

12 Design for scene 4: The Awakening

Pencil and watercolour
48 × 66.8 cm
Signed in ink: Bakst
Dated: 1921
Inscribed on verso: 'Je certifie que ce dessin, un décor pour "La Belle au Bois Dormant" (Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev, Londres 1921) est, sans aucun doute possible, de la main de mon père/Léon Bakst/Paris le 20 juillet 1967/André Bakst'

Provenance
I. Gourvitch, Paris
Sotheby's, London, 18 July 1968, lot 18
HH Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan
Sotheby's, London, 6 June 1979, lot 28

Literature
A *The Graphic*, Christmas Number (London, 1927), ill.
Spencer, Charles, *Léon Bakst* (London, 1973), ill. pl. v, p. 51
B *The Dancing Times* (London, October 1921), pp. 2–4
The Dancing Times (London, November 1921), pp. 178–85
Beaumont, Cyril W., *The Dancing Times* (London, December 1921), pp. 207–20, 283
The Dancing Times (London, January 1922), pp. 331–36
The Sketch (London, 16 November 1921), p. 244
Grein, J.T., *The Illustrated London News* (London, 19 November 1921)
Terry, Dr R.R., *The Queen* CL no. 3909 (London, 26 November 1921), p. 673
Turner, W.J., *The Illustrated London News* (London, 21 December 1921)
Levinson, André, *L'Amour de l'Art* III (Paris, 1922), pp. 211–16
Howard, Deborah, 'A Sumptuous Revival', *Apollo* (London, April 1970), pp. 301–308
Schouvaloff, Alexander, *The Antique Collector* (London, January 1985), pp. 60–63

Collections
SET DESIGN
Baltimore, Maryland, Evergreen House Foundation
COSTUME DESIGNS
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum
Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University, Harvard College Library (George Chaffee Ballet Collection)
Hartford, Connecticut, Wadsworth Atheneum
London, Victoria and Albert Museum

This is one of Bakst's most successful scene designs. The curtains swagged in complex shapes within the proscenium columns, the drapes round the bed, the shaft of sunlight through the window, the glimpse of rococo architecture, the pink and gold on the floor and, dominating the scene, the massive black eagle which, because it is set asymmetrically, is not just an exaggerated heraldic symbol but is a threatening and protective bird of gigantic size guarding the minute and delicate figure of the sleeping princess in her enormous bed, are all in total contrast to the previous hunting scene in the forest. It is a transformation scene. And it did not work.

It is a marvellous painting. The stillness of the scene and the quiet expectancy as Prince Charming comes to wake the Princess with a kiss has been achieved by Bakst by the positioning of the figures and the bird eyeing the Prince suspiciously, by the scale, by the shaft of light and by using yellow paint instead of gold. But it was all too complicated. The flying of the drapes and wheeling on so large a truck for the bed with such a huge bird perched on top proved to be impractical without an interval in which to do it.

The programme printed before the first night describes the ballet as being in five scenes with two intervals but the second edition describes it as being in four scenes with one interval. The

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original scene 4, The Awakening, has been cut and merged into the beginning of the original scene 5, The Wedding. Levinson describes the scene: 'Intermède musical: marche à travers les ronces et les fourres. Arrivée au palais et le baiser libérateur; scène très brève; au début, la princesse dort sur une estrade sous un gigantesque ciel de lit. Fiançailles, dénouement; l'action est epuisée.'[1] Levinson also edited the book *Oeuvre de Bakst pour la Belle au Bois Dormant* which includes fifty-four designs for the ballet including all the scenes except this one. Cyril W. Beaumont, who is a most faithful and detailed recorder of every moment of every ballet that he saw, wrote: 'With the raising of the curtain the spectator is introduced to a vast hall in King Florestan's palace. Everything is in deep shadow and a monstrous web guarded by two enormous spiders hangs from the ceiling to the floor. A dusty beam of light illumines the centre of the apartment where is set a grey stone tomb. Upon the top reclines the Princess Aurora, fast asleep. The air seems to vibrate to faint, melodious music. Presently a dim figure emerges from the left. As it draws closer it is possible to recognise the red coat and feathered hat of Prince Charming. He picks his way with cautious steps the while he remarks wonderingly the evidence of decay and neglect that everywhere confront him. He espies the tomb and walks towards it. He climbs the steps at its base and regards with sorrow the incarnation of the vision of the forest. He bends over and kisses her lips. There is a crash of thunder, the Princess opens her eyes and slowly sits upright. The Prince takes her hand and lifts her to the ground. There is a burst of triumphant music, and in a moment the palace is ablaze with lights. The tomb disappears below the floor and the web and the spiders crumble to powder.'[2] Beaumont was certainly at the first night which, originally scheduled for 31 October, had to be postponed twice for technical reasons. One of the most serious 'technical reasons' was obviously this scene. The photograph of the catafalque (fig. 2) is what Beaumont saw and there is a drawing for it done on Savoy Hotel writing paper.[3] The photograph (fig. 1), reproduced in *The Sketch*, clearly showing Aurora and Prince Charming on the bed as in this design, must have been taken during rehearsals. But this set was never seen by an audience.

In 1911 Diaghilev had written to *The Times*: '. . . quant à *La Belle au Bois Dormant*, ce ballet interminable au sujet tiré d'une fable française, composé sur des thèmes français, ne possède aucun élément national qui puisse justifier l'idée de donner à Londres cette Féerie franco-italienne. . . .'[4] But by 1921 everything was different. It was after the War; it was after the revolution, and Diaghilev and his team of friends, colleagues, 'displaced persons' were stranded. Early enthusiasm for what had happened in Russia had been replaced by disappointment.

1 Prince Charming and Princess Aurora on Bakst's set. Photograph taken at rehearsal by Walter Benington, reproduced in The Sketch (London, 16 November 1921) (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

2 Princess Aurora on the 'grey stone tomb' described by Cyril W. Beaumont which is how the scene was for the postponed first night. Reproduced from an unidentified cutting in the William Beaumont Morris Scrapbooks (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Notes

1 Levinson, André, 'L'Oeuvre de Bakst pour la Belle au Bois Dormant', *L'Amour de l'Art* III (Paris, 1922), p. 215

2 Beaumont, Cyril W., *The Sleeping Princess, Part Two* (London, 1921), p. 9

3 Reproduced in Kochno, Boris, *Diaghilev et les Ballets Russes* (Paris, 1973), p. 173

4 Letter to *The Times* (London, 10 March 1911)

Diaghilev knew that he would never return to his country. When he started the Ballets Russes he deliberately ignored and even slightly despised the 'classical' full length ballets of Petipa which were being regularly performed in Moscow and St Petersburg. Instead, with Fokine as choreographer, he invented and developed the one-act ballet where all the elements of the production were of equal importance. But in 1921 although Diaghilev had quarrelled with Fokine and was without a choreographer, he and his company were not just the Russian Ballet, they were also the symbol for the art of ballet. They now felt they had a duty to maintain the classical tradition which, because of the new circumstances, should not now be despised but even glorified. Also, one huge, spectacular, long running successful production would guarantee financial stability. And Diaghilev needed to make money. He always needed money. Benois and Stravinsky eagerly supported Diaghilev. Together they chose the most 'classical' of all ballets, the pinnacle of Petipa's art, *The Sleeping Beauty*. In spite of having quarrelled with Bakst over the commission for *La Boutique Fantasque*, which Diaghilev had taken away from Bakst and given to André Derain, Diaghilev now turned again to Bakst because he knew that only he would be able to produce the kind of grand spectacle that was needed. *The Sleeping Beauty* had been first performed at the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg on 3(15) January 1890. Bakst had been in the audience: 'I lived in a magic dream for three hours, intoxicated with fairies and princesses, splendid palaces flowing with gold, in the enchantment of the old tale. My whole being was as if swayed in cadence to the rhythms, the radiant flow of refreshing and beautiful melodies, which were already friends. . . . That evening, I believe, my vocation was determined.'[5] Diaghilev retitled the ballet *The Sleeping Princess* because, the story goes, he did not think that any of his dancers was a beauty.

The production started badly and most of the critics gave unfavourable reviews. The most harsh was Ernest Newman who wrote in *The Sunday Times* of the 'suicide of the Russian ballet'. What went wrong? It was huge, certainly, with no expense spared. Diaghilev had spent the original £10,000 advance made to him by Oswald Stoll, the producing manager, and a further two payments of £5,000, so that only full houses for the run could show a profit. It was spectacular but English audiences of the time were used to the Drury Lane pantomimes and for them *Sleeping Beauty* was a pantomime not a ballet. There were not enough people interested in classical dancing to fill a theatre the size of the Alhambra for six months.

Petipa, the original choreographer, was born in Marseilles in 1822 and went to St Petersburg in 1847. In 1858 he was appointed Ballet Master of the Imperial Ballet and, until his death in 1910, composed fifty-seven ballets. The history of his ballets is the history of the development of the technique of classical dancing, and this development had only taken place in Russia. *The Sleeping Beauty* was Petipa's greatest achievement in the demonstration of technical virtuosity. But choreography which shows off pure technique requires a trained audience capable of appreciating it. The English audience of 1921, apart from a few balletomanes who raved about it, was not ready. It was as if a Russian were asked to appreciate the finer points of cricket.

But the critics did agree and were ecstatic about another part of the spectacle: '*The Sleeping Princess* is an example to all producers of theatric decor. It possesses originality to the extent of genius, it preserves unity between costume and set, and it creates that most difficult of all decorative results, a sense of rhythmic perfection.'[6]

Bakst based some of the designs and ideas for *The Sleeping Princess* on the production of *The Sleeping Beauty* which he had done for Anna Pavlova's company which was first performed at the New York Hippodrome on 31 August 1916. But the vast majority of the designs for the 1921 production was new work. Only two or three of the designs reproduced in Levinson's book of 1922 either have the date or can be attributed to 1916.[7]

The Sleeping Princess was the last production that Bakst designed for Diaghilev. Diaghilev had promised Bakst the responsibility for designing *Mavra*, but broke his contract and commissioned Léopold Survage instead.[8] Bakst never forgave Diaghilev.

Notes

5 Bakst, Léon, *Tchaikovsky at the Russian Ballet*, Alhambra Theatre souvenir programme for *The Sleeping Princess*, London, 1921

6 'Notes on Decor', *The Dancing Times* (London, December 1921), p. 283

7 Levinson, André, *The Designs of Leon Bakst for The Sleeping Beauty* (London, 1923). Some of the designs were reworked for the book because they bear the date 1922. A French edition was first published in Paris in 1922

8 Opera in one act by Igor Stravinsky first performed at the Théâtre national de l'Opéra, Paris on 3 June 1922. The set design by Bakst for the opera is in the Victoria and Albert Museum

Léon Bakst

13 Design for Carlotta Brianza's costume as the Wicked Fairy, Carabosse, in scene 2

Pencil and watercolour (on card)
44.4 × 28.8 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1921
Inscribed in pencil: 'Leger/*Manteau* de la/Fée Carabosse 2 acte/en soie *mat*
Ampleur pour/cacher en dessous/la robe du I acte!'
Inscribed in pencil, erased: 'Ier act Carabosse'
Inscribed on verso: 'No 179 Série is/La Belle'/'Observer 10/65'
Stamped on verso: 'Serge Lifar Collection'

Provenance
Serge Lifar Collection
Ader, Picard, Tajan (Commissaires-Priseurs), Hôtel George v, Paris, 20 June 1974, lot 23
Dominique Keller
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 20

Exhibitions
London, Forbes House, *The Diaghilev Exhibition*, 3 November 1954–16 January 1955, no. 278
Paris, Musée Galliéra, *Hommage à Diaghilev*, 23 June–3 September 1972, no. 14

Literature
B Grein, J.T., The World of Theatre', *The Illustrated London News* (London, 19 November 1921)

This design was one of a number of extra items which Richard Buckle included in his Diaghilev Exhibition which was transferred to London during the winter of 1954 from Edinburgh where it had been such a success at the International Festival. In the catalogue, however, Richard Buckle notes: 'The drawing of the face suggests that this is a hasty copy by one of Bakst's pupils, although it is signed by the artist.' It may have been hasty because Bakst was very busy preparing an enormously elaborate production and this costume did not require any decorative detail. Just a cloak with a hood. But, in my view, the drawing is all by Bakst even if the painting has been done by a pupil. Bakst has taken care with the silhouette to show the fullness (emphasised by the inscription) and the lightness that he wants and still maintain the menacing quality of the character. The inscription is written in a softer pencil than the signature. The original soft lines in the face have been reinforced after painting with the same harder pencil used for the signature. The technique of the drawing is not unlike that used for the face of the old man in *Sadko*.

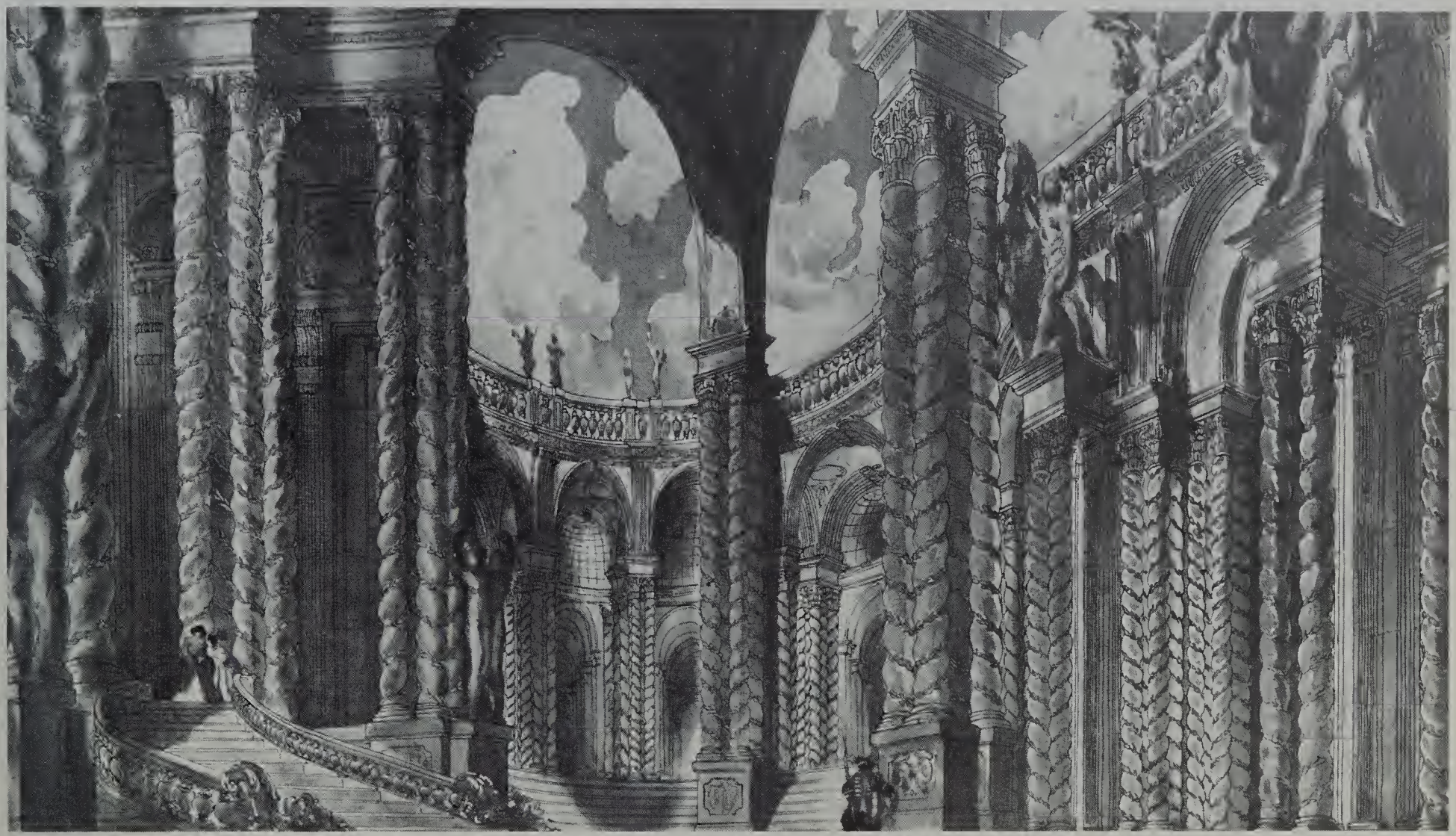
Diaghilev, being superstitious, always liked connections and so he was very pleased to be able to cast the first Aurora, Carlotta Brianza, who was teaching in Paris at the time, as Carabosse.

No dancer could be expected to dance the main parts night after night for what was planned to be a long run. Therefore the principal dancers were interchanged. Princess Aurora was danced by Lubov Egorova, Olga Spessiva and Lydia Lopukhova; the Lilac Fairy was danced by Bronislava Nijinska, Lydia Lopukhova and Lubov Egorova. During the run (105 performances) there were other changes of which no record now exists. As *The Dancing Times* said: 'One of the features of its [*The Sleeping Princess*] interpretation is the extraordinary number of *prima ballerinas* who are in the cast. These are constantly changing parts, and unfortunately the programme is not always able to keep pace with these changes, and is sometimes inaccurate. Visitors should be on their guard, and if they are doubtful about the identity of one of the dancers – if they think she is not the person whose name is given in the programme, they should ask one of the attendants, who will be found very willing to give any help they can.'[1] One record, however, does exist. On 5 January, for one performance only, and to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his first public appearance, the part of Carabosse was played by Enrico Cecchetti who created the role in the first production.

Note
1 *The Dancing Times* (London, December 1921), p. 180

1 Liubov Egorova as Princess Aurora and Carlotta Brianza as Carabosse in The Sleeping Princess. Photograph taken at rehearsal by Walter Benington, reproduced from an unidentified cutting in the William Beaumont Morris Scrapbooks (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

The caption to the illustration (fig. 1) reproduced from the Morris scrapbooks reads: 'This rare and hitherto unpublished picture has an historic interest, for it shows Liubov Egorova as Princess Aurora and Carlotta Brianza rehearsing the spindle episode of *The Sleeping Princess* in the 1921 Diaghilev production. The photograph must have been taken at a dress rehearsal, for Egorova is wearing Aurora's wedding dress and the scenery is that of the last act.' It is not known where or when this photograph was published. The caption writer, writing some years after the event, was obviously unaware that the same photograph (but masked in to the figures) had been published in *The Illustrated London News* on 19 November 1921 where it is credited to Walter Benington.



2 *Set design for the final scene of The Sleeping Princess. Reproduced in André Levinson, L'Oeuvre de Léon Bakst pour la Belle au Bois Dormant (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London). The actual backcloth used in the production is in the collections of the Theatre Museum*

Léon Bakst

14 Design for an early eighteenth-century male costume

Pencil, watercolour, gold and silver paint (on card)
28.8 × 21.8 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1921

Provenance
Dominique Keller
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 19

Literature
B Levinson, André, *The Designs of Leon Bakst for The Sleeping Beauty* (London, 1923)
L'Illustration, no. 4130 (Paris, 29 April 1922), p. 391
The Illustrated London News (London, 13 May 1922)

In 1921 Bakst was preoccupied with working on *The Sleeping Princess*. The simplicity of this costume, however, shows that it was not for this production although the drawing, the character of the face and the general stance is vaguely reminiscent of the design for Gallisson, the Prince's Tutor (fig. 1). Bakst, as all great designers for the theatre, was meticulous about basic historical accuracy in his work which he then embroidered with his own fantasies. He knew that the real is not theatrical and this costume is too real. It is therefore probably a preliminary study of a costume of the period which Bakst then later developed. All the costumes for *The Sleeping Princess* were much more highly decorated than this one (fig. 2).[1] At first glance this design appears to be just a rapid sketch. But there is nothing unfinished about it even though the colours are in a flat wash. The white parts of the costume have been left deliberately unpainted in order to give it the feeling of not being brand new, of having been worn and used. And the eyes, unpainted, are vivid and cruel. Bakst used this trick with his drawing of the old man in *Sadko* [11]. The effect is different but both characters are real. Bakst knew very well when to use paint and when not to. So here he has heightened the wig with grey and put a diamond silver pin on the stock.

It is also possible that this design could have been used for one of the characters in *Artemis Troublée*, a ballet set and dressed in the early eighteenth century, presented by Ida Rubinstein at the Théâtre national de l'Opéra in Paris on 28 April 1922.[2]

Notes
1 The Theatre Museum in London has a large collection of the original costumes for *The Sleeping Princess* and none of them is as plain as this one. Even the huntsmen, with their red coats and mauve hats, were more fanciful
2 *Artemis Troublée* had a libretto by Léon Bakst, with music by Paul Paray and choreography by Nicola Guerra. Ida Rubinstein danced the part of Artemis

[14] 1 *Costume design for Gallisson, the Prince's Tutor in The Sleeping Princess. Reproduced in André Levinson, The Designs of Léon Bakst for the Sleeping Princess (London, 1923), pl.* XL *(Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

[14] 2 *Costume design for a huntsman in The Sleeping Princess. Reproduced in André Levinson, The Designs of Léon Bakst for the Sleeping Princess (London, 1923), pl.* XLIII *(Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien

Mystery play in four acts by Gabriele d'Annunzio

Director: Armand Bour
Choreographer: Michel Fokine
Sets and costumes: Léon Bakst
Composer: Claude Debussy
Conductor: Henry Defosse
Company: Ida Rubinstein

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
St Sébastien: Ida Rubinstein
The Mater Dolorosa: Suzanne Desprès
The Emperor: Desjardins
The Prefect: Henry Krauss
The Voice: Jane Laval

FIRST PERFORMANCE OF REVIVAL
Théâtre national de l'Opéra, Paris, 17 June 1922
FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, 22 May 1911 with the same principals except that the Mater Dolorosa was Adeline Dudlay and the Voice was Rose Féart
In 1911 the play was in five acts. Act II was cut for the revival.

Synopsis

ACT I The pagan mob calls upon the Prefect to order the torture of the Christian twin brothers, Marc and Marcellien, while Sébastien, the leader of the archers of Emesus stands motionless in his golden armour. The mother of the two boys begs them to sacrifice upon the altars of the imperial gods. Their refusal to do so converts many to Christianity. Sébastien is seized with holy delirium and calls upon Heaven for a sign. He shoots his last arrow which does not fall. Sure that he is one of Christ's elect he dances with bare feet on live embers which have for him the coolness of lilies. It is the Saint's first ordeal.

ACT II The Emperor Diocletian is enthroned in the palace which houses all the gods. The priests of Apollo sing a paean in praise of the Emperor but he does not hear them. His attention is held by Sébastien as he knows of his miracles. The priestesses of Byblos believe Sébastien to be Adonis and they praise his beauty. The Emperor orders the young man to sing but Sébastien breaks the lyre which is handed to him. Defying the curses he enacts the Divine Passion. The Emperor wants to rank him with the gods and gives him the Orb of Victory. Sébastien destroys the emblem and the Emperor orders him to be punished. The Saint's head rests on the broken lyre and while the priests are singing he is to be suffocated under the weight of garlands and flowers. It is the Saint's second ordeal.

ACT III The Saint is bound to the trunk of a laurel tree in the grove of Apollo. By order of the Emperor he is to die from the arrows shot by his own archers. The archer Sanae proposes to free Sébastien so that they may fly away together. The Saint refuses and orders his ordeal to commence. In his last delirium he sees the Good Shepherd. The Saint's rapture is shared by those around him who obey his orders and pierce him to death with their arrows. The priestesses of Byblos take away the Saint's body. All the arrows have vanished as if they had been rays of light. The women place the body of the Saint on a bier, covered in purple. So ends the Saint's last ordeal.

ACT IV The Chorus of the Martyrs, the Virgins, the Apostles and the Angels greet the Saint in Paradise. Sébastien's soul replies to them and all the heavenly choirs unite in praising the Lord.

Léon Bakst

15 Design for the set of Act I: The First Mansion, La Cour des Lys

Pencil, watercolour, gouache and gold paint (laid down)
43.4 × 58 cm
Signed in watercolour over-written in pencil: Bakst
Undated

Provenance
The estate of the artist
Sotheby's, New York, 6 June 1974, lot 36

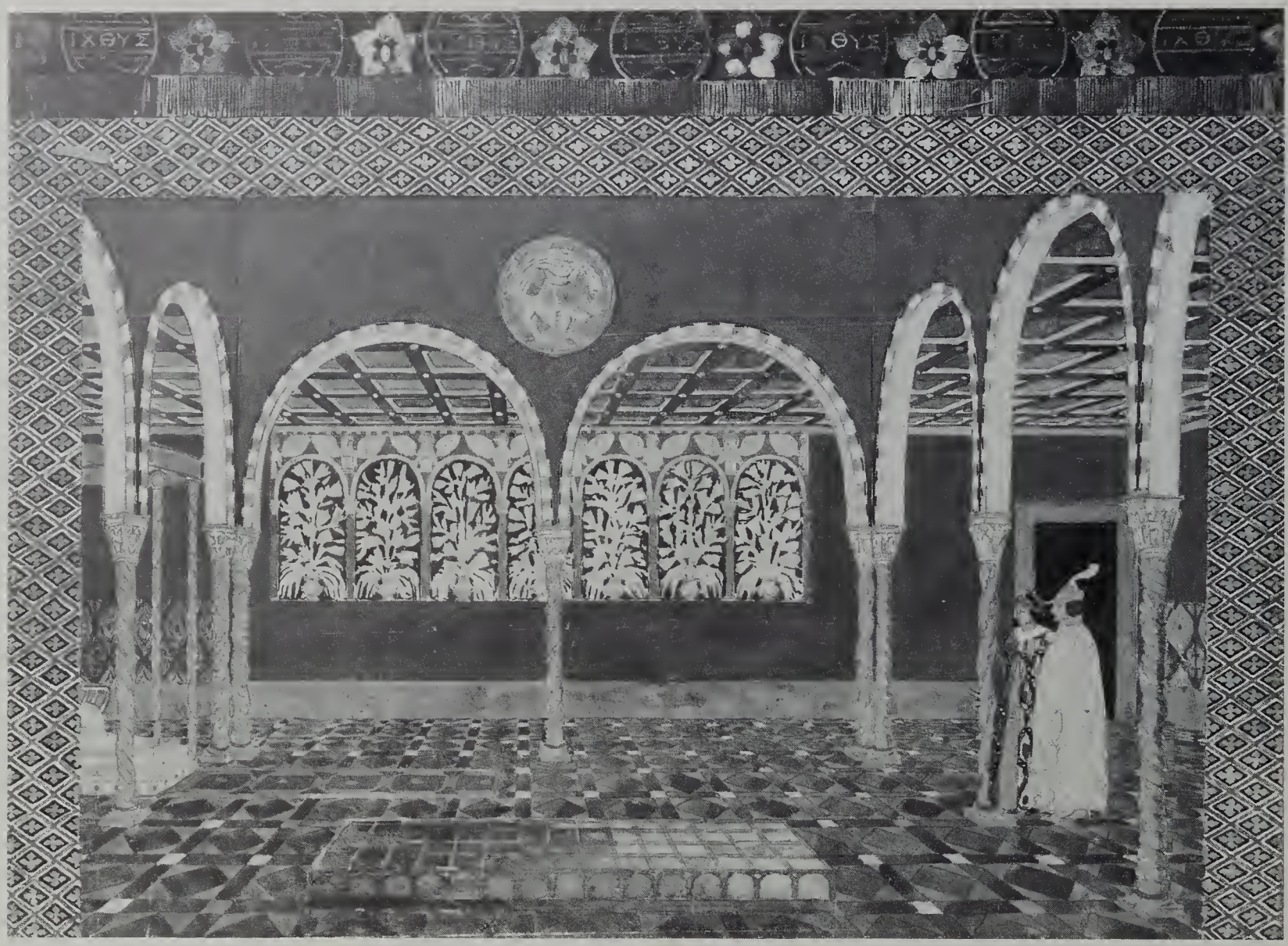
Literature
B *Le Figaro* (Paris, 22 May 1911)
Brussel, Robert, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 23 May 1911), p. 5
Le Figaro, 'Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre' (Paris, 23 May 1911), p.5
L'Illustration Théâtrale (Paris, 17 May 1911), the complete text
Chulkov, Georgi, *Rech* (St Petersburg, 22 May (4 June) 1911), p. 3
L'Illustration (Paris, 27 May 1911), p.444
Le Théâtre (Paris, June (1) 1911), the whole edition devoted to *Le Martyre de St Sébastien*
Strunsky, Rose, *New York Tribune* (New York, 5 September 1915), p. 1 of special feature section
Bakst, Léon, letter published 13 June 1922 in unidentified Paris newspaper (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
Vuillermoz, Emile, unidentified cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
le Ferre, Georges, unidentified cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
Brillant, Maurice, *Les Oeuvres et les Hommes* (Paris, 25 July 1922), p. 371 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
J.B., *Le Théâtre et Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, August 1922)

The poster announcing the ten gala performances of the first production in 1911 had blazoned in large, bold type: '150 Artistes, 350 Exécutants, 500 Costumes' and a description of the five acts. D'Annunzio, in his text, gives a detailed description of Act 1, La Cour des Lys: 'Un portique intérieur . . . avec le carmin, l'outremer et l'or . . . Par les sept arcades du fond ouvertes sur des jardins bleus, on aperçoit de grandes gerbes de lys . . . un autel de marbre . . . se dresse dans l'enceinte . . . une couche épaisse de charbons et de tisons couvre les dalles, au centre, en forme de parallélogramme. . . . Des apparitions tout autour, avec des soufflets et des barres, rallument et remuent de temps en temps la braise qui pâlit.' Bakst followed the description very closely but interpreted it in his own way. The particular originality is in the daring juxtaposition of sapphire blue and emerald green – a colour combination Bakst repeats exactly in the costume design for *Hélène de Sparte*.[1]

This is one of at least two drawings that Bakst made for this set. The signature is clearly post-1920 but it is undated. The style, however, is much earlier, much more in the style of 1911. Comparing it with the black and white illustration (fig. 1) of the same scene it would seem to be an earlier and unfinished version. It also has a slightly battered look: some of the paint has flaked off and it has been laid down. I can only suppose that when Ida Rubinstein decided to revive *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* eleven years after the first production all that Bakst could find in his studio was this preliminary drawing to use as a reference for painting the set, and he signed it then.

One of the rare occasions that Bakst talked about his work was when he gave an interview to Rose Strunsky of *The New York Tribune*: '. . . It is in line as well as in colour that I make my emotions. . . . Sometimes I bring out the purely mystic in the stage setting, as in d'Annunzio's *St Sébastien*. . . . Because the subject matter was essentially Christian, I used the cross in a thousand

Note
1 It was seeing these two colours used together that gave Cartier the idea of setting emeralds and sapphires together



1 Variation on the set design of Act 1, c.1911, of Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien. Earlier version of [15]*: top border has been left out and the roundel above the centre arches has been changed in the real set to the same pattern as that drawn in* [15]

variations, for the basis of my linear ornamentation, not only disguised and hidden in the costumes and accessories and ornaments in the beautiful play of d'Annunzio, but even in the lines of the landscape and buildings of the scenery. My method is generally to take a simple motif and vary it indefinitely, so as to create a harmony of colour and line . . .'.[2] An essential part of the 'harmony of colour and line' in this scene is the floor but, as can be seen from the production photograph (fig. 2), it was left out of the finished set and the total effect, except from the stalls, must have been spoiled. It could not have been a matter of expense. To decorate the floor was obviously too revolutionary and must have been thought to be unnecessary.

Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien in 1911 had been a triumphant success. Most critics shared the view of Robert de Montesquiou who wrote about Ida Rubinstein: 'Ce que je veux, d'abord, c'est crier mon admiration, pour ce qu'elle a exteriorisé du Saint personnage, dont elle avait assumé l'étonnante, la terrible responsabilité de figurer la beauté profane et la surhumaine mysticité. Disons tout de suite qu'elle y a excellé, non seulement sans porter ombrage à la plus juste des exigences d'un auditeur scrupuleux, mais en augmentant l'édification de celui-ci, par son respect de la tradition et sa compréhension du mystère. J'ai vu beaucoup de choses, beaucoup de belles choses, je n'en ai vu aucune qui se puisse comparer en beauté, selon moi, à ce qu'une telle artiste offre à nos regards, durant tout le premier acte et la plus grande partie du troisième.'[3] But not all critics were taken in. François de Nion saw through the absurd pretentiousness of the piece: '. . . Je ne sais rien de si lamentablement et prétentieusement ennyeux que ces cinq actes qui se trainent à travers l'incompréhensible, au milieu de psalmodies hurlantes.'[4]

Notes

2 'Léon Bakst on the Modern Ballet', interview of Bakst by Rose Strunsky, *New York Tribune* (New York, 5 September 1915), p. 1 of special feature section

3 *Le Théâtre* (Paris, June (1) 1911), p. 14. 'The first thing I should like to do is to express my admiration at the way she brought the Saint to life and managed to embrace the astonishing and fearsome problem of combining profane beauty with supernatural mysticism. Let me say straight away that in this she was perfection itself for she managed not only to avoid giving any offence to the most scrupulous and critical spectator but to succeed in deepening his awareness of the holiness of the Saint by her reverence of the legend and her understanding of its mystery. I have seen many things, many beautiful things, but in my experience, I have never seen anything to compare in beauty with what this artist disclosed to our gaze during the

2 Archers, Bourreaux, La Mère Douloureuse. Marc and Marcellien on the set for Act 1 of Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien. Photograph by Bert, reproduced in Le Théâtre (Paris, June 1911) (National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Ida Rubinstein, carried on the cloud of general eulogy, saw *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* as a vehicle she could use and decided to revive it in 1922. The original play, however, was much too long. Even she realised that. But what she did not realise was that by cutting completely one of the acts, the second act, she made the play even more incomprehensible. The vehicle, without one of its wheels, collapsed.

Bakst was full of doubt about his work. In a letter to the press he wrote: 'J'étais rempli aussi d'inquiètudes: je me demandais, errant parmi mes décors et l'amas des costumes mal rassemblés, les yeux et les sens ouverts et eclairés tout d'un coup démésurément par la grace divinatrice de Claude Debussy – je me le demande encore – si je serais à la hauteur de cet enchantement.'[5] But no one else had any doubts about Bakst's work. Even though so many years had passed and so many things had happened in between the two productions, even though the whole art of theatre had changed, there was still an audience for spectacle of the old-fashioned kind, even though the play itself had become absurd. Georges le Ferre summed up the view: 'Je n'aime pas cette pièce-pastiche agaçante à tous les points de vue. Cependant les décors et les costumes de Bakst sont un enchantement. Voici, poussé jusqu'au point de perfection le plus extrême, le triomphe du décor peint. La couleur de M. Bakst 'chante' à ce point qu'au premier acte les acteurs semblent au coeur d'une gamme éblouissante.'[6]

A message from Rudyard Kipling addressed to M.Klotz, President of the Committee for the 'Panthéon interallié de la Somme' was read by Mme Segond-Weber of the Comédie Française during the second interval of the first gala performance.[7]

Notes
whole of the first act and most of the third.'
4 Cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
5 Cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
6 Cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
7 The full text of the address was printed in *Le Figaro* (Paris, 18 June 1922)

Léon Bakst

16 Design for the curtain for the beginning of Act I

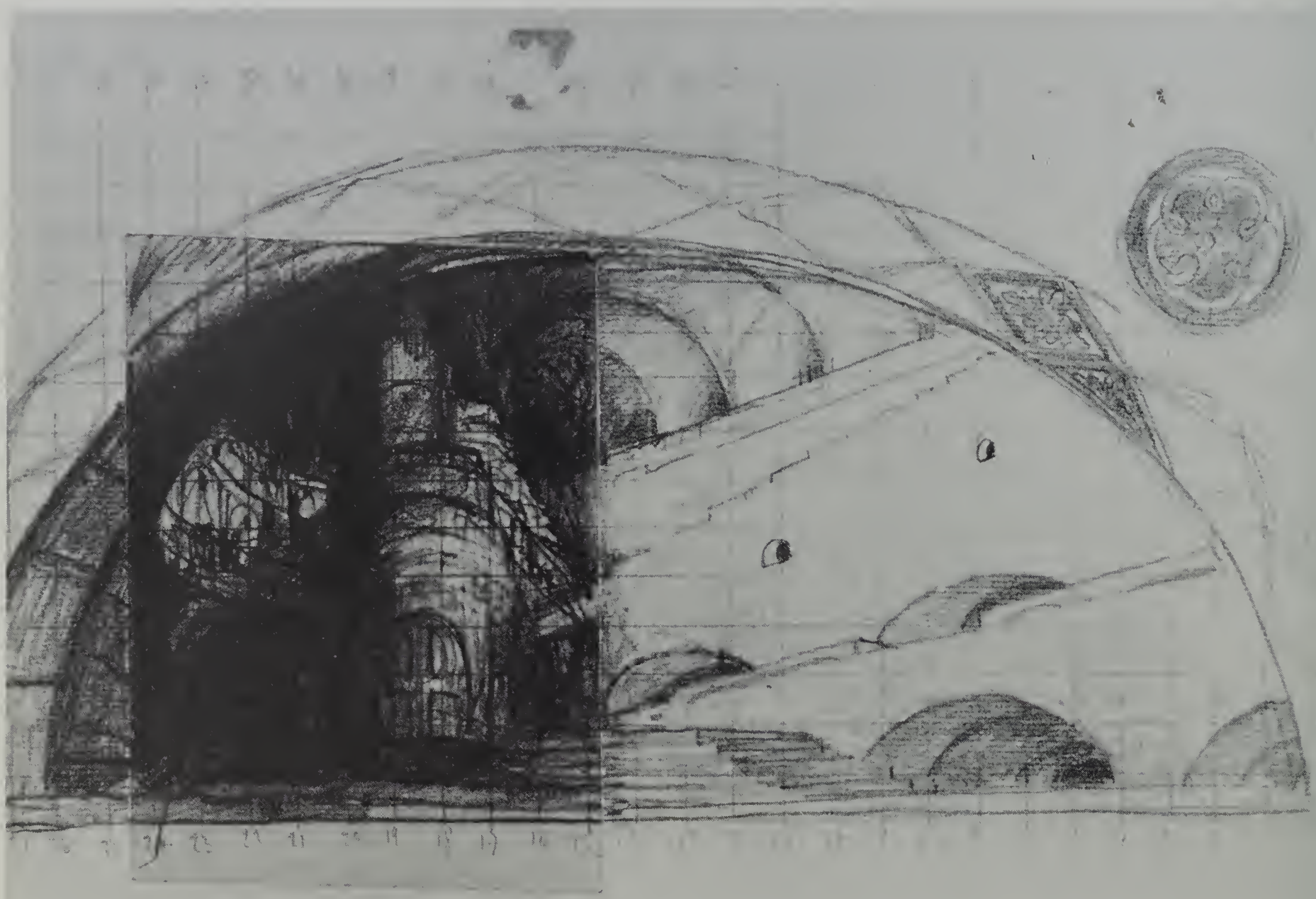
Pencil, watercolour, gold and silver paint
52.8 × 80 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1922

Provenance
The Fine Art Society
Sotheby, Monte Carlo, 26 June 1976, lot 776

Exhibitions
London, Fine Art Society, *Bakst*, 3 December 1973–4 January 1974, no. 17

Literature
A Levinson, André, *Bakst: the story of the artist's life* (London, 1923), ill. pl. XXVI
Sheringham, George and Laver, James, *Design in the theatre* (London, 1927), ill. pl. 71
Fülöp-Miller, René and Gregor, Joseph, *The Russian Theatre* (London, 1930), ill. fig. 88

This was a new design which Bakst made for the revival of the play, the beginning of which takes place under a Roman portico. He has used the same pattern for the border here as for the previous design. Comparing the two would seem to confirm that they were not done at the same time. Although the basic pattern is identical in both, the diamond shapes in this one have been elongated, the blue has been sharpened, the green edge has been left out, and silver has been used instead of gold. The comparison shows, however, how Bakst carried over an idea to achieve the harmony and the unity that he wanted from his set designs. The preliminary scaled drawing (fig. 1) has been patched where he had further thoughts and the architecture on the finished design is even more fantastical and monumental. But the mistake of shading the thickness of the arch which, as the light is coming from the right of the picture, would not have been in shadow is repeated in the final drawing.



[16] 1 *Preliminary drawing for the set design for Act 1 of Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien*

Judith

Dramatic comedy in three acts by Henry Bernstein

Director: André Antoine
Set: Sergei Soudeikine
Costumes: Léon Bakst
Composer: E.C. Grassi

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
Judith: Mme Simone
Ada, Judith's servant: France Ellys
Abigail: Paulette Noizeux
Holopherne: Grétillat
Vagaoo, the Eunuch: Alcover
Saaph: Henri Rollan
Sisarioch: Gabrio
Charmi: Numès
Hasphenor: Rouyer

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre du Gymnase, Paris, 13 October 1922

Synopsis
ACT I Judith is the muse of Bethulie. Holopherne has come to lay siege on Bethulie. Both are in search of the love they have been unable to find. She is the chaste and pure widow of a husband she respected but did not love. He is a man who has made love too easily but whose heart has been starved. They meet each other.
ACT II Each gets the measure of the other. They fall in love. But he is nervous and afraid of being duped. She wonders if this is true love at last.
ACT III That love which she could never feel for her husband, is she to feel it for this Barbarian, Holopherne, who holds her life in his hands and whom she has come to kill? She does kill him, by cutting off his head, but not without having loved him.

Léon Bakst

17 Design for Henri Rollan's, M. Gabrio's and M. Numès's costumes as the Three Generals in Act II: L'Ile des Bienheureux

Pencil, watercolour, gouache, gold and silver paint (on card)
48.8 × 33 cm
Signed in watercolour: Bakst
Dated: 22
Inscribed in pencil: 'TROIS GENEREAUX/2me tableau'
Inscribed on verso: 'no 101 Série/"Judith"/G. Rasamatt/11 rue Louis Français/Paris 13e'

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 30 May 1974, lot 34

Literature
B Réau, Louis, Roche, Denis, Svietlov, V and Tessier, A., *Inedited works of Bakst* (New York, 1927), compare pl. XVIII
Spencer, Charles, *Léon Bakst* (London, 1973), compare ill. no. 43
Le Figaro (Paris, 9 October 1922)
Girard, Maxine, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 13 October 1922), p. 3
Le Figaro (Paris, 14 October 1922), p. 1, extract of text of play p. 4
de Flers, Robert, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 18 October 1922)
Paris Music-Hall (Paris, 1 November 1922)
Le Théâtre et Comoedia Illustré (Paris, November 1922)

Collections
Baltimore, Maryland, Evergreen House Foundation

Bakst sometimes used his costume designs for later drawings, keeping the pose or reversing it into a mirror image and changing only the detail and the colour (see [7], drawing of a Bayadère). There is a photograph of Bakst taken in 1924, the year of his death, showing him working on a new version of a famous design he made for *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* in 1911. But as far as I can tell the only time that Bakst used a standard module of a figure for his costume designs for a production was for *Judith*. The pose in this design for three of the main characters is a mirror image of the design for Hasphenor reproduced in *The Inedited works of Bakst* and the one reproduced here for Hopherne (sic) (fig. 1) which was probably the first one to be made.[1] This design was then copied by tracing. All the designs vary in detail, the head dresses, the bracelets, the sandals and the skirts. The decoration on Holopherne's skirt accurately repeats the photograph which Bakst has attached to his design. Bakst was still punctilious about his research but adapted his discoveries to suit his own ends. The characters are Assyrian but they are Bakst Assyrian.

Taking short cuts did not diminish the quality. The drawing, particularly of the face, the beard and the arms, is very strong. But something went wrong with the painting of the breastplate – the colour has not 'held' and some drops of silver paint which spilt on the paper bottom left, have been painted out in white. Bakst was very busy at this time preparing for an important exhibition in New York (see [18]) and he may have been hoping to include this design. But the spilt paint made it imperfect and being a perfectionist, he rejected it.

This production was also one of the very few for which Bakst designed only the costumes. He always saw himself not as a designer but as a painter responsible for the whole picture on stage. He must have agreed very late to do the costumes for *Judith*. The whole project was a race against time. The *répétition générale*[2] had to be postponed from 9 to 11 October because the costumes were not ready: 'Ce délai permettra aux artistes de répéter deux fois dans les costumes dont M. Léon Bakst a peint les maquettes.'[3]

Notes
1 Réau, Louis, Roche, Denis, Svietlov, V. and Tessier, A., *Inedited works of Bakst* (New York, 1927), ill. pl. XVIII
2 Really a public dress rehearsal. Critics were only invited to the *première* (13 October). On 12 October there was a Gala Performance in aid of the Confédération des Sociétés Scientifiques Françaises
3 *Le Figaro* (Paris, 9 October 1922)

BAKST

1 Costume design for Hopherne (sic) in Judith

The result pleased most of the critics. 'Le spectacle était habilement presenté dans des décors de Soudeikine[4] et des costumes de Bakst d'un equilibre parfait, dans des harmonies tantôt violentes et tantôt sourdes, toujours soumises au chef d'orchestre électricien.'[5]

The designs for this production have sometimes been confused with designs that Bakst made for Alexander Serov's opera *Judith*, two acts of which Diaghilev included in his Paris season of 1909 at the Théâtre du Châtelet.

Notes
4 Sergei Soudeikine (1882–1946) began as a painter but made his name as a theatre designer, particularly for the Kamerny Theatre, Nikita Balieff's Chauve-Souris and for the Metropolitan Opera in New York
5 *Le Théâtre et Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, November 1922)

2 Mme Simone as Judith.
Reproduced in Le Théâtre et Comoedia Illustré (Paris, November 1922)
(Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Léon Bakst

18 Le Sultan Samarcande

Pencil, watercolour, gouache, gold and silver paint
67.3 × 48.5 cm
Signed in watercolour: Bakst
Dated: 1922
Inscribed on verso: 'Léon Bakst' (? in Serge Lifar's handwriting)

Provenance
Christie's, London, 2 July 1974, lot 125

Exhibitions
New York, M. Knoedler & Co., *Recent works by Bakst*, 6–16 December 1922, no. 15

Literature
A Thomas, Louis, *International Studio* (March 1923), ill. p. 480
B *New York Times* (New York, 25 & 29 November, 6, 10 & 24 December 1922)
Tripp, Susan, G., *Bakst at Evergreen* (Baltimore, n.d.)

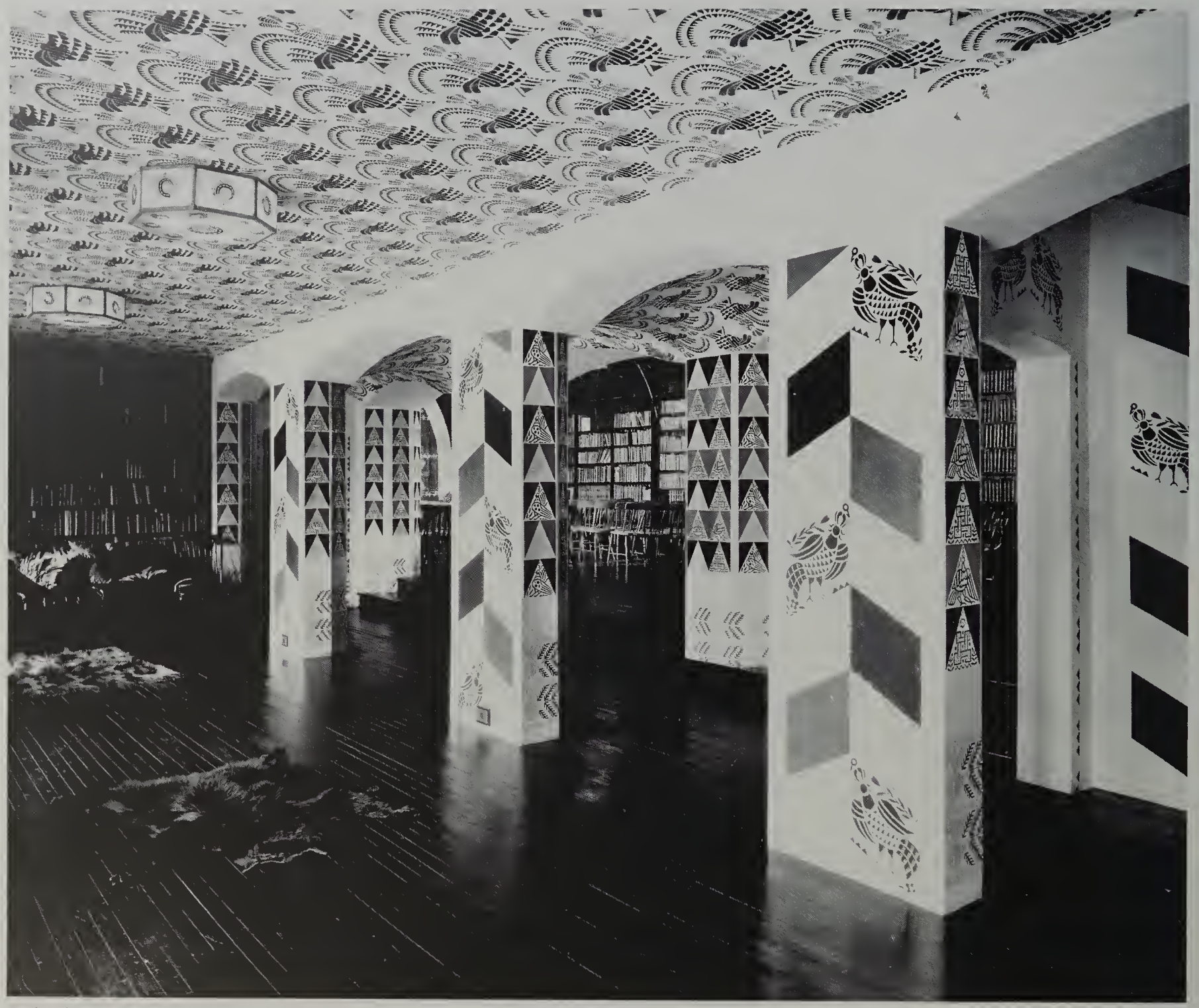
This startling picture is not a design for the costume in any production. It is more than twice the usual size and was made for exhibition. The Sultan has come into the frame, has stopped off centre, but perfectly balanced, and with total confidence rivets his eyes on us as if to demand an explanation for our looking at him, for our being there at all. But we, entranced like a rabbit, cannot avert our gaze. The drawing is delicate but we feel the strength and solidity of the figure from the weight of the head dress, the thickness of the beard, the clenched hand, the fur round the hem of the coat and the slipper on the foot where the line of the pattern changes from the vertical to the horizontal. The slipper is hardly more than a suggestion but it finishes the figure firmly standing on the non-existent floor.

Bakst was most famous for costume design, and exotic orientalism was what was expected of him. But there is nothing automatic about this painting, nothing unoriginal, and yet it is unmistakable Bakst. He used the same pattern of diamonds and triangles before in *Le Dieu Bleu* but where, earlier, they had been 'oriental' here, by their colour and arrangement, they are derived more from Russian folk art. These are the patterns which he extended and developed in his designs for textiles and wallpapers and in his decorations for the Evergreen House theatre in Baltimore which he did during his visit to the United States.

Bakst arrived in America for the first time on 2 November 1922 when he was quoted as saying that the New York skyline at the Battery was 'more interesting than Venice'.[1] He had been invited by Mrs John W. Garrett, the wife of the US Ambassador to Holland, who had been his

Note
1 *New York Times* (New York, 25 November 1922), p. 1

BAKST
1922



1 The library at the Evergreen House Foundation which is also the foyer to the theatre (Evergreen House Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland)

patron for some time. She had sponsored an exhibition of Bakst's work at The Hague in 1919 as well as his exhibition at M. Knoedler & Co. in New York in the following year. The success of that exhibition which included a portrait of Mrs Garrett[2] made it possible for Bakst to repay the loans she had made him. 'In the picture, Mrs Garrett in a White Hindoo turban and a blue and white robe with a black sash is little less bizarre than is the black and white gown she wore on Saturday. Her white stockings and square-toed sandals laced around her ankles with black ribbons were certainly conspicuous . . . '[3]

This second exhibition at M. Knoedler & Co. was an equal success. Mrs William K. Vanderbilt jr gave a lunch for Bakst on 5 December 1922 at her house at 666 Fifth Avenue. 'Following this the hostess and guests walked down the avenue to the show. Practically everyone in the Social Register appeared at some time during the afternoon.'[4] There were eighty-one exhibits divided into three sections: *Portraits* (the portrait of Mrs John W. Garrett, lent by her, was no. 1),

Notes

2 Eighty-four exhibits including groups of designs for *Les Dames de Bonne Humeur* (sic), *Sadko* and *La Belle au Bois Dormant* (for Anna Pavlova's 1916 production)

3 *Town Topics* (15 April 1920)

4 *New York Times* (New York, 6 December 1922), p. 19

2 The proscenium arch of the Evergreen Theatre with Alice Garrett in costume on stage in a setting also designed by Bakst (Evergreen House Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland)

Sujets Décoratifs (including *Le Sultan Samarcande*, priced by Bakst at $600), and *Contes Perrault*. A small section at the end included four designs for *Judith*.[5] Sir Joseph Duveen bought three of the paintings and presented them to the Metropolitan Museum.[6]

Bakst stayed on in the United States as a guest of the Garretts at their house Evergreen and decorated the small, private theatre which was used by Alice Garrett herself (she was an amateur singer) and by the Musical Arts Quartet. The interior design of this theatre is unique in the work of Bakst (figs 1,2). He 'incorporated the various designs he chose into an overall decoration on the ceilings, walls, and columns. The effect is bold, almost kaleidoscopic, because the colors are magentas, azures, and yellow-greens (here used on a white ground). Yet the whole is harmonious and well-integrated. It will not distract any playgoer from the play.'[7] The theatre was officially opened in May 1923.

Notes

5 From the catalogue of the exhibition, M. Knoedler & Co., 556–558 Fifth Avenue, New York, annotated by Bakst with 'Prix proposés par Bakst'

6 *New York Times* (New York, 24 December 1922), section 8, p. 4

7 Tripp, Susan G., *Bakst at Evergreen* (Baltimore, n.d.)

Léon Bakst

19 Le Sultan vindicatif

Pencil, watercolour, gouache and silver paint
66.8 × 48.6 cm
Signed in watercolour: Bakst
Dated: 1922

Provenance
Sotheby's. New York, 6 December 1979, lot 68

Exhibition
New York, M. Knoedler & Co., *Recent works by Bakst*, 6–16 December 1922, no. 21

Literature
B *Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, 20 May 1914), souvenir programme, 1914 season, Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London

This, as the previous drawing [18], was also made specially for exhibition and is almost exactly the same size. It is again larger than any costume design made for a production. But because of Bakst's fame as a costume designer for the theatre the temptation is always to try to ascribe every drawing to a particular play or ballet. This drawing has been wrongly ascribed to the production of *La Légende de Joseph* in spite of the fact that the drawing is clearly dated 1922 and the first performance of the ballet took place in 1914.[1] Although it bears a close resemblance to one of the designs Bakst made for that ballet (fig. 1) it is only a superficial resemblance; only the stance and the cut of the costume are the same. The colours are quite different. For *La Légende de Joseph* Bakst used reds, greens, mauves, purples and gold. In the costume (here illustrated in black and white) the coat is in purple, the shirt and trousers are in red and the embroidery and decorations are in gold. Bakst did not use blues and silver for the ballet. The silver paint here is applied very thickly to give an almost three-dimensional effect to the drawing. And Bakst has carefully avoided symmetry in the head dress, the position of the hands, the decorations, the stripes in the trousers and the level of the feet in what, at first glance, appears to be a symmetrical drawing. Although he has here used an earlier idea, it is a thrilling painting.

For a general note see [18].

Note
1 Ballet by Comte Harry von Kessler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, with music by Richard Strauss, choreography by Michel Fokine, sets by José-Maria Sert first performed by the Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev at the Théâtre national de l'Opéra, Paris on 17 May 1914

BAKST
1922

[19] 1 *Costume design for La Légende de Joseph. Reproduced in Russian Opera and Ballet, souvenir programme, 1914 season, Drury Lane Theatre (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

[19] 2 *Double page spread showing Marie Kousnetzoff as Potiphar's wife and one of Bakst's costume designs for Potiphar in La Légende de Joseph from the Illustrated Souvenir Programme for the Royal Theatre (sic) Drury Lane 1914 season of Russian Opera and Ballet (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London). Bakst used a similar decorative 'grecian' border, seen here in Marie Kousnetzoff's skirt, for Holopherne's costume in Judith (see* [17] *fig. 1) and the style of the exhibition drawing is again reminiscent of this earlier design*

Phaedre

Tragedy in three acts by Gabriele d'Annunzio translated from the Italian by André Doderet

Director: Armand Bour
Sets and costumes: Léon Bakst
Composer: Ildebrando Pizzetti
Conductor: Philippe Gaubert
Company: Ida Rubinstein

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
Phaedre: Ida Rubinstein
Astynomé: Suzanne Desprès
Aethra: Moreno
Hipponoé, l'esclave Thébaine: Sylvie
Gorgo: Mady-Berry
Eunoa: Marguerite Greyval
Thésée: Desjardins
Eurytos: Paul Capellani
Hippolyte: Yonnel
Le Pirate Phénicien: Chambreuil

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre national de l'Opéra, Paris, 7 June 1923

FIRST PERFORMANCE (in Italian):
Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 20 March 1915, directed by Gino Marinuzzi with Salomea Kruceniski, Fanny Anitua, Di Giovanni and Grandini as the principal singers

Synopsis
It is the same legend as dramatised by Euripides (see the synopsis for *Hippolytus* [1]) and Racine in his *Phèdre* but with certain differences introduced by d'Annunzio:
ACT I Theseus gives Hippolytus three presents: a wild horse, a silver vase and a Theban slave. Phaedre kills the slave out of jealousy.
ACT II Phaedre passionately kisses Hippolytus while he is asleep. Hippolytus escapes. Theseus arrives. Phaedre accuses Hippolytus and Theseus calls upon Poseidon to bring him vengeance.
ACT III Poseidon kills Hippolytus. The whole of Troezen is desolate. Theseus is suddenly doubtful. Eurythos tells him the truth. Phaedre kills herself not by hanging (Euripides) and not by taking poison (Racine) but by having arrows shot at her by Artemis (d'Annunzio).

Léon Bakst

20 Design for the set of Act II: Les demeures de Phaedre

Pencil, watercolour and gouache (on card)
33.5 × 52.3 cm (image size)
48.5 × 67.3 cm (paper size)
Signed in ink: Bakst
Dated: 23
Inscribed on verso: 'No 58 JA/Phèdre (ant [in Russian] 44)'

Provenance
The estate of the artist
Sotheby's, New York, 15 December 1977, lot 29A

Literature
A Réau, Louis, Roche, Denis, Svietlov, V., and Tessier, A., *Inedited works of Bakst* (New York, 1927), ill. p. 89
Einstein, Carl, *Léon Bakst* (Berlin, 1928), ill. p. 18
B *Le Figaro* (Paris, 6 June 1923)
Schneider, Louis, *Le Gaulois* (Paris, 7 June 1923)
Farrère, Claude, *Le Gaulois* (Paris, 8 June 1923), pp. 2–3
Le Temps (Paris, 8 June 1923)
Beaunier, André, unidentified cutting, 8 June 1923
de Beauplan, Robert, *Le Théâtre et Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, August 1923)
Theatre Arts Monthly (New York, January 1924), pp. 66–67
Mosso, Angelo, *The Palaces of Crete and their Builders* (London, 1907)
Evans, Sir Arthur, *The Palaces of Minos, a comparative account of the successive stages of the early Cretan civilisation as illustrated by the discoveries at Knossos* 4 vols (London, 1921–35)
Bakst, Léon, *Serov i ya v Gretzii (Serov and I in Greece)* (Paris, 1923)

Collections
COSTUME DESIGNS
London, Victoria and Albert Museum
Paris, Musée national d'Art Moderne
SKETCHBOOKS
Leningrad, State Russian Museum

During May 1907 Bakst realised a dream and travelled to Greece with his great friend Valentin Serov.[1] They visited the mainland and the most important islands, including Crete. Everywhere they went they sketched. This visit not only changed Bakst's whole vision but had a lasting effect on his work. It was responsible for his palette – those colours that everyone calls 'Bakstian'.

In Crete, Bakst saw the Palace of Minos at Knossos which had only recently been discovered, excavated and reconstructed by Arthur Evans. The tapering columns of the staircase were used by Bakst for his cover design (fig. 1) for the magazine *Apollon* in 1909.[2] Bakst also spent many hours in the Museum at Candia (Heraklion) where the objects found at the Palace were exhibited. 'The museum is amazing and surprising with all its new excavations revealing the

Notes
1 Valentin Serov (1865–1911), son of the composer Alexander Serov, was most famous as a portrait painter (Chaliapin, Diaghilev, Ida Rubinstein) and for his paintings on historical and mythological themes. His work for the theatre included the design of the front cloth for *Schéhérazade* and the poster, based on a drawing of Anna Pavlova, for the first Ballets Russes season in Paris
2 An arts and literary magazine published in St Petersburg from 1909 to 1917. To some extent it replaced *Mir Iskusstvo*

1 Cover design of Apollon (St Petersburg, 1909)

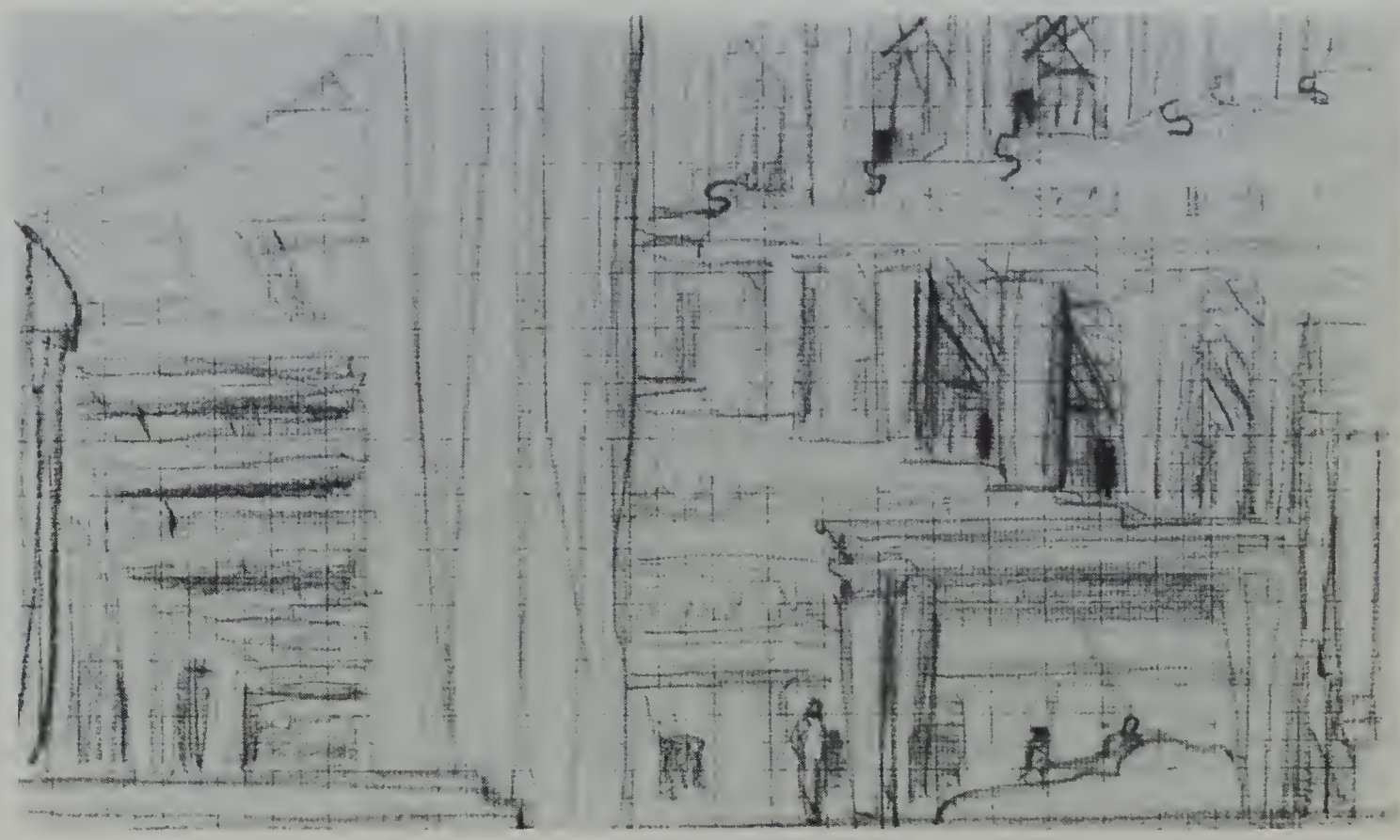
secrets of ancient Greece' Bakst wrote to his wife.[3] Again he sketched all the objects and the decorations on them. People had asked Bakst for many years to describe this visit to Greece but he only published his book *Serov and I in Greece* in 1923. Therefore that visit sixteen years earlier must have been very much on his mind when he was asked to design *Phaedre*. He must have referred to all those sketches that he had made on the site of the Palace of Minos and in the Museum. His setting for *Phaedre* is the Palace but interpolated in his own way. The staircase in the design is the so-called Grand Staircase as described by Arthur Evans and drawn by Christian Doll.[4] The reconstructed elevation shows the flights of steps all going down from left to right with a corridor on each landing. Bakst has changed this so that the steps go down continuously without a corridor. He has also added more columns. They are the same shape but the painted decorations are copies of patterns Bakst saw in the Museum. Mosso, writing at the same time as Bakst saw the Palace, describes what he saw: '. . . the architects lighted the

Notes

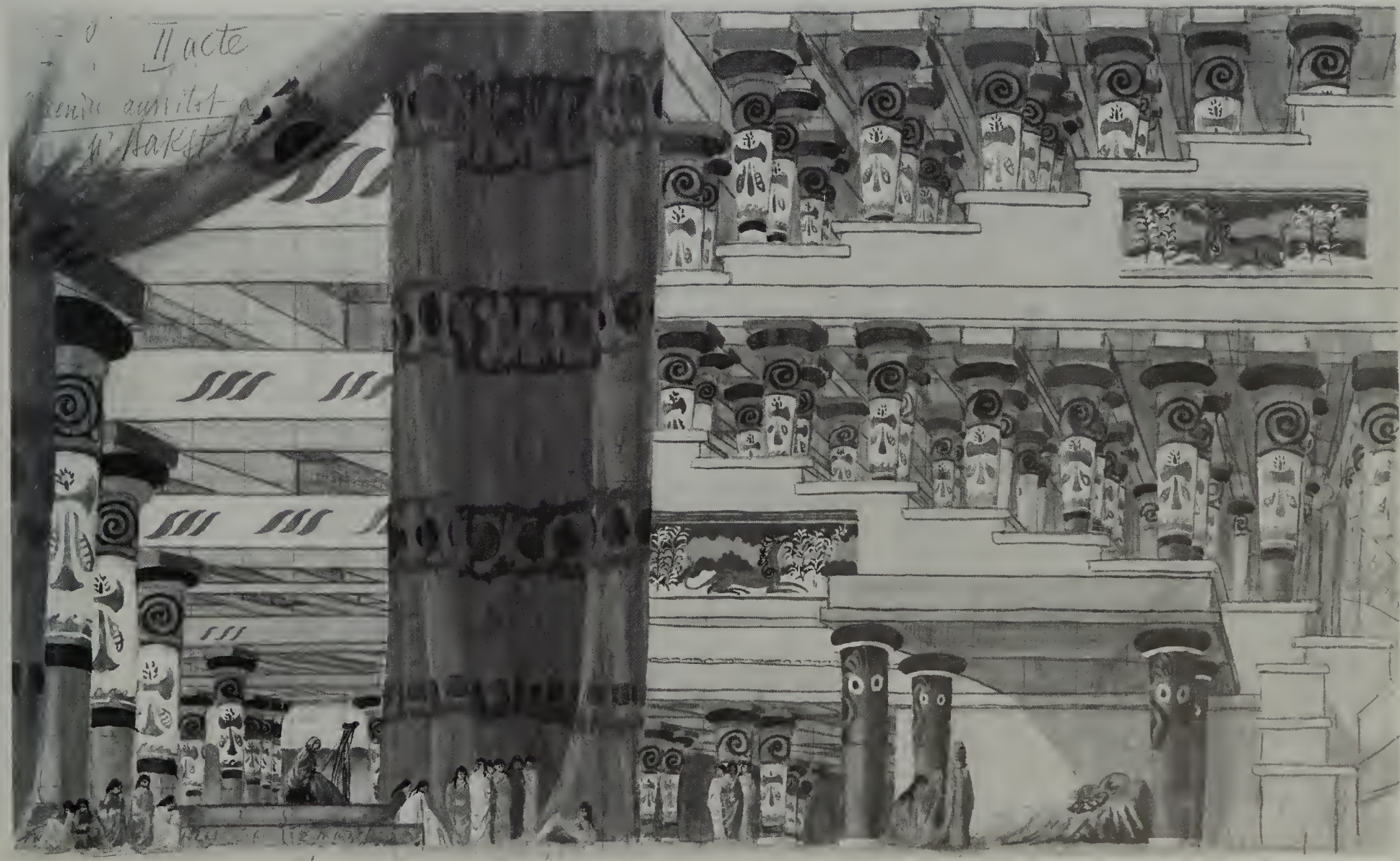
3 Letter dated 20 May 1907 (State Tretyakov Gallery). Quoted by Pruzhan, Irina N., *Lev Samoilovitch Bakst* (Leningrad, 1975), pp. 110–11

4 Evans, Sir Arthur, *The Palace of Minos* I (London, 1921), p. 340, fig. 247

2 Preliminary study for the set design for Act II of Phaedre



3 Scaled working drawing of the set design for Act II of Phaedre, inscribed by the artist 'II acte, a rendre aussitot a M. Bakst'. This was probably for the scene builders because this is as much of the set as was seen on stage. But Bakst enriched the decorative detail on the hangings



4 Set for Act II of Phaedre at the Opéra, Paris. Reproduced from an unidentified cutting dated 24 June 1923 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)

rooms built against the hillside by means of small courts surrounded by columns. In the rectangular space which Dr Evans calls the queen's apartment there are four of these courts. I returned several times to admire this corner of the palace of Minos, which Dr Evans has prepared as a pleasant recreation for students of antiquity. It was a house of at least four storeys, and nothing like it is known in classical Greece.'[5] Bakst gives a view of the hillside at the end of the row of columns on the floor – a tiny breath of air in the oppressive grandeur. The oppressiveness is emphasised by Bakst by the enormous swag of curtain on the left and the group of diminutive figures huddled at the base of the column of curtain left of centre. The two friezes on the walls of the staircase of huge griffins lying amongst papyrus-stems are almost exact copies of the friezes found in the Throne Room of the New Palace (fig. 5). Bakst must have seen these frescoes in the Museum because they are not visible in the photograph of the Throne Room reproduced in Mosso's book.[6]

The problem for Bakst in designing this scene for *Phaedre* was one of scale. The real Palace was huge and this design shows that hugeness, even exaggerates it. On Doll's reconstructed elevation the columns of the staircase are just under two metres high.[7] In Bakst's design they are about four metres high. But even the stage of the Opéra in Paris was not big enough (fig. 4). The top of the proscenium arch cut the set off just below the tops of the columns on the second flight of steps. Although he lost some of the set Bakst maintained the scale. One critic liked it: 'Phèdre est rentrée dans ses propres demeures, les plus prodigieuses, le plus cyclopéennes de tout ce que vous imagineriez pour la Titanide, fille de Minos et de Pasiphaë . . . M. Léon Bakst est un maître qui grandit de jour en jour!'[8] Another critic thought it was all too much: 'La tache des comédians et du metteur en scène M. Armand Bour était dure, dominés, écrasés qu'ils étaient par des décors cyclopéens, impressionants d'ailleurs mais d'une splendeur oppressante.'[9] He missed the point. Bakst always used scale and colour as symbols for the action on stage. The set and the costumes are the visual markers for the emotions of the actors. The colours have to sing and the audience has to receive the right notes from their music. De Beauplan understood Bakst: '. . . au second (acte), l'entassement des colonnades aux assises superposées, dans le palais de Phèdre, écrasent symboliquement de leur grandeur la petitesse humaine.'[10]

Notes

5 Mosso, Angelo, *The Palaces of Crete and their Builders* (London, 1907), pp. 122–23
6 *Ibid.*, p. 120, fig. 53
7 Evans, Sir Arthur, *op. cit.*
8 Farrère, Claude, *Le Gaulois* (Paris, 8 June 1923), pp. 2–3
9 Boissy, Gabriel, unidentified cutting, 8 June 1923 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
10 de Beauplan, Robert, *Le Théâtre et Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, August 1923)

Phaedre was the last grand, full length production that Bakst designed for Ida Rubinstein. His last work for the theatre, the ballet *Istar*, with music by Vincent d'Indy and choreography by Leo Staats, performed at the Opéra in Paris on 10 July 1924, also had Ida Rubinstein as the principal dancer.

By the time she came to play Phaedre, Ida Rubinstein had completely lost her Russian accent but still remained the 'Reine des attitudes'. And her gala evenings continued.

5 *Design for the frieze on the wall of the staircase for Act II of Phaedre*

Léon Bakst

21 Design for Mlle Sylvie's costume as Hipponoé, the Theban slave, in Act I: l'Atrium du Palais de Thésée à Thrézène

Pencil, watercolour, gold and silver paint
29 × 21.2 cm
Signed in pencil: Bakst
Dated: 1923
Inscribed in pencil: '*Esclave Thébaeinne*/1er role (*Mlle Sylvie*)'

Provenance
Fine Art Society, London
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 59

Exhibitions
Milan, Galleria del Levante, *Léon Bakst*, 2–22 May 1967, no. 74
(This exhibition was also shown in Rome, May–September 1967 and in Munich, October–November 1967)
London, Fine Art Society, *Bakst*, 3 December 1973–4 January 1974, no. 103

Literature
B Dubech, Lucien, unidentified cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
Le Temps (Paris, 8 June 1923)

The Theban slave, a virgin, was one of the three presents given by Theseus to his son Hippolytus. She caused a rage of jealousy in Phaedre. 'L'orage de passion qui la [Phaedre] dévore est irrésistible. Elle étrangle de ses propres mains la jolie esclave Thébaine qui est envoyée à Hippolyte et dans un mouvement d'une farouche grandeur elle traine son cadavre jusqu'au pieds de l'inéxorable déesse.'[1]

This design is Bakst *à la grecque*. The diadem, the tresses and the sandals are accurate representations of ancient Greek sculpture but the dress is pastiche. It has a Greek look about it, certainly, but it is Bakst reworking his pre-1914 ideas for Paquin to suit the fashion of the '20s with the belt just above the hips. And the girl is too well dressed to be a slave. The silver floral decorations are taken from what Bakst saw at Knossos. She could be a fashionable 'maiden' at a cocktail party. But her face shows no fear. The open gaze, the half smile, the relaxed pose, using Greek sculpture, give her a look of total innocence. In *Le Sultan vindicatif* [19] Bakst used blues and silver to symbolise strength, cruelty and riches. Here he uses blue (a darker, less vibrant shade) and silver as symbols of virginity to contrast with the hot reds, oranges, greens and black of the set. The Theban slave is vulnerable. And the costume helped the actress: 'Mme Sylvie . . . est tout à fait touchante et voluptueuse dans le rôle d'une esclave barbarement sacrifiée.'[2]

Notes
1 *Le Temps* (Paris, 8 June 1923)
2 Dubech, Lucien, unidentified cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)

Léon Bakst

22 Design for M. Desjardins' costume as Theseus

Pencil, watercolour, gold and silver paint (laid down)
30.8 × 22.3 cm
Signed with stamp: Bakst
Undated
Inscribed in pencil (not in the artist's handwriting): 'Phaedre [erased and really illegible] 46 fig 19'

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 15 December 1969, lot 24
Galerie du Lac, Vevey, Switzerland

Literature
A Spencer, Charles, *Léon Bakst* (London, 1973), ill. p. 162, no. 157
B Graves, Robert, *The Greek Myths*, 2 vols (London, 1957)

This design is a puzzle. The lion-skin head dress is usually associated with Hercules. But Hercules is also usually depicted carrying a club and not a sword. Robert Graves says that Theseus also wore the lion-skin and 'will therefore have been the sacred king'. He also says that 'sandals and sword are ancient symbols of royalty'.[1] Hercules is not a character in *Phaedre* but Theseus is.

Charles Spencer describes this design as 'Warrior'.[2] In spite of the 'symbols of royalty' and the gold belt the design is simple. Other existing costume designs for this production, including a design for Theseus, are much more ornate with vast, intricately decorated and multi-coloured shirts and cloaks repeating the patterns that Bakst discovered at Knossos. This is a warrior-like figure with his aggressive look and on guard with his sword but Bakst, with his exactitude, would not have transposed regal symbols on to a mere soldier. Theseus is a character in the play but was this design for this production? Bakst saw his productions *in toto* with the principal characters usually in contrast to the background and the minor characters complementary to it. This design is in harmony with the general colour scheme of the set for *Phaedre*. So is it for a minor character?

The style of the drawing is also not the same as for the other major characters in this production which are either even more stylised, statuesque, with heads in profile, or freer like the Theban slave. The style here is reminiscent of a slightly earlier date, about 1917–18. This is consistent with the fact that Bakst had begun to work on *Phaedre* as early as 1917 and therefore this could be one of the first drawings for the production which he later discarded. It could also have been made for exhibition but it would not have been inscribed except by Bakst. And he would have signed it himself.

The inscription is tantalisingly illegible. The word could have been 'Phaedre' or 'Hercule' or something else, but it was not written by Bakst. The majority of designs stamped 'Bakst' are probably not by Bakst. They were all stamped after his death. Bakst would never have put his signature where it is on this design. But only Bakst would have bothered to introduce a blob of silver paint on the end of the handle of the sword.

It could be an earlier design for *Phaedre*. It could be a design for Theseus. It was not used for Ida Rubinstein's production. It remains a puzzle.

Notes
1 Graves, Robert, *The Greek Myths* 1 (London, 1957), pp. 326–27
2 Spencer, Charles, *Léon Bakst* (London, 1973), p. 237

Bakst

Studio of Léon Bakst

23 Design for the costume of a dancer in a harem

Pencil, watercolour and silver paint (on card)
28.5 × 18.5 cm
Signed with stamp: Bakst
Undated
Inscribed on verso in pencil: '38 Série Bis/Harem'
Stamped on verso: 'G. Rasamatt/Dépositaire exclusif/des oeuvres de Léon Bakst'/G. Rasamatt'

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 6 June 1979, lot 53

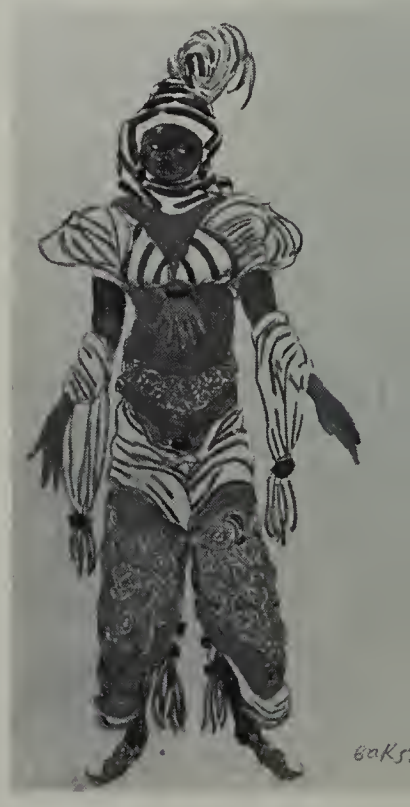
This design is not by Bakst.

There are touches of Bakstian character about the drawing of the face and, in particular, the shading under the chin, but otherwise the drawing is very weak. Bakst would never have drawn the feathers in her hat or the folds in the material at her elbows or ballooning trousers so carelessly. He would have been more precise about the beading on her shoulders and round her neck, and the silver stripes on her trousers. The colours are wrong.

And the whole figure is wrong. Her face is too demure; it has no character. Her breasts are crude with nipples like pimples; they are not erotic. Her hands are impossible and her midriff is anatomically incorrect. Bakst was sometimes careless about drawing hands but he could draw them when he wanted to and, even when stylised, they are real. Bakst knew about bodies and never got them wrong. Her legs are apart and she has feet but she is not standing; she is purely two dimensional. She is about to collapse. Bakst's figures all stand firm and solid.

But the real clue is that this girl has no sex appeal. Compare this drawing with Bakst's design which is illustrated in black and white (fig. 1). There are similarities between the two but they are superficial. It shows the difference between the thinness of the imitator and the depth of Bakst. Apart from the girl being a real girl, the hand above the belly button is an infinitely more erotic image than the naked breasts. The hand is an unmistakably distinctive touch of the master's genius.

1 Costume design by Léon Bakst, c.1920



Bakst

George Barbier

24 Parisette prépare sa Saison d'Hiver

Pen and ink
36.5 × 31 cm
Signed in ink: G.B.
Dated: 1915

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 30 May 1974, lot 96

This is not a design for the theatre. It was almost certainly done as an illustration to a story in a magazine, but I have not been able to discover whether or not it was published. 'Parisette' in the title of the drawing means young Parisienne: she is here selecting her winter wardrobe. It is an imaginary scene and the placard held by the angel provides the clue. The rue de la Paix was renowned as *the* street in Paris in which to buy fashionable clothes. Most of the famous couture houses, including Paquin and Worth, were to be found in this street at the time this drawing was made. But the house of Marthon did not exist.[1] This plausible name was invented by Barbier.

By 1915 Barbier had begun to make his name as an illustrator of particular fineness, delicacy and charm. He had published two limited edition books inspired by the Ballets Russes, one on Nijinsky, the other on Karsavina[2] which had been successful (fig. 1). But Barbier's unique line is the result of a lot of preparatory work (fig. 2). He was a 'commercial' artist in the best sense of that word and he clearly devoted great attention to this particular commission although he had to cover up a basic fault in its original composition. The attention goes firmly from the kneeling maid with her black skirt and black hair but with space above her, through the look of the standing 'Parisette', to the hoop in which the title of the story or some other information would be printed later. But at first, the angel carrying the notice above his head must have appeared to be too slight a figure, so Barbier had to fill in the space between it and the hoop with a hat and feathers making sure that they broke the line of the hoop in order to correct the composition. The hat is impossible in reality, because the angel is holding a placard not a box, but it completes the design. It was necessary to introduce this decoration to balance the composition: an instinctive and felicitous correction.

Barbier understood and knew about the technical problems of printing so his line was always sharp and clear when his design was to be mass-produced in illustrated journals using colour such as *L'Illustration* or *La Vie Parisienne*, or in the limited edition fashion magazines of the period[3] where colour was applied later either by hand or by using the *pochoir* (stencil) method. This design would not, however, have been coloured. The black of the maid's skirt against the bold band of black across the floor broken by the wave of black of the hem repeated in reverse on the bodice is part of the whole composition which has been thought of in terms of black and white only.

Notes
1 There is no mention of Marthon in the Paris street directories of the period
2 de Miomandre, François, *Danses de Nijinsky* (Paris, 1913); Vaudoyer, Jean-Louis, *Thamar Karsavina* (Paris, 1914)
3 *La Gazette du Bon Ton*, Paris 1912–25; *Journal des Dames et des Modes*, Paris, 1912–14; *La Guirlande des Mois*, Paris 1917–21; *Falbalas et Fanfreluches*, Paris, 1922–26. For a full list of these limited edition magazines see Robinson, Julian, *The Golden Age of Style* (London, 1985)

Marthon
rue de la Paix

[24] 1 *An impression of Tamara Karsavina and Vaslav Nijinsky in Spectre de la Rose which was designed by Bakst. Reproduced in Album dedié à Thamar Karsavina par George Barbier et Jean-Louis Vaudoyer (Paris, 1914). pl. 1 (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

[24] 2 *Preparatory drawing of Tamara Karsavina at the beginning of Spectre de la Rose for Album dedié à Thamar Karsavina par George Barbier et Jean-Louis Vaudoyer (Paris, 1914)*

La Dernière Nuit de Don Juan

Dramatic poem in two parts and a prologue by Edmond Rostand

Director: André Calmettes
Sets: Jusseaume
Costumes: George Barbier

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
L'Ombre blanche: Marguerite Moreno
Une ombre: Valsamaki
Don Juan: Pierre Magnier
Sganarelle: Jean Coquelin
Le Pauvre: André Calmettes
Le Diable: Yonnel
Le Commandeur: Praxy

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, Paris, 9 March 1922

Synopsis
Rostand's play begins where Molière finishes and the Prologue shows Don Juan descending a staircase with the Commander. Don Juan is caught by the Devil but is given a reprieve of ten years.
PART 1 Ten years later. It is Don Juan's last night. He waits for the Devil to collect him. A puppet master appears and presents a marionette show. The puppet master turns out to be the Devil in disguise. The Devil invites Don Juan to have supper with him and afterwards parades in front of him his 1003 conquests who arrive as shadows in a fleet of gondolas. The shadows disembark one by one but Don Juan cannot recognise any of them.
PART 2 As Don Juan continues to try to recognise the shadows they begin to reproach him. But he shows no remorse. Finally the White Shadow confronts him but he cannot recognise her either. Don Juan asks to exchange places with a Pauper but the Devil condemns Don Juan into being a puppet.

George Barbier

25 Design for the costume of one of the Shadows

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and silver paint (laid down)
26.7 × 20 cm
Signed in ink: George Barbier
Dated: 1921 (corrected to 1922)

Provenance
Sotheby's London, 29 October 1981, lot 125(ii)

Literature
A Barbier, George, *Vingt-Cinq Costumes pour le Théâtre* (Paris, 1927), ill. pl. v
B de Beauplan, Robert, 'La Dernière Nuit de Don Juan: Histoire d'une oeuvre posthume', *L'Illustration* (Paris, 5 February 1921), pp. 100–101
Rostand, Edmond, 'La Dernière Nuit de Don Juan (text of play illustrated by George Barbier)', *L'Illustration* (special edition) (Paris, 5 February 1921), pp. 107–30
Manegat, Jean, 'Au Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin', *Le Théâtre et Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, March 1922)
Girard, Maxime, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 10 March 1922)
de Flers, Robert, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 13 March 1922)

Edmond Rostand began to write this play in 1911 at the suggestion of the actor Le Bargy. It was planned for the 1914–15 season at the Porte-Saint-Martin theatre with Le Bargy as Don Juan, de Max as the Devil, Jean Coquelin as Sganarelle and Marthe Mellot as the White Shadow. The costumes and scenery were to be designed by José-Maria Sert. He even made some sketches. But the War put a stop to the production. Various other plans came to nothing and then the death of Rostand in December 1918 put an end to the whole project. The text of the play was finally established from the author's notebooks by Mme Edmond Rostand, Maurice and Jean Rostand, and first published in the magazine *L'Illustration* in 1921. Barbier was commissioned to provide the illustrations (fig. 1). 'Les aquarelles exquises dont il l'a illustrée la complètent et la commentent de la façon la plus expressive et la plus charmante. Elles sont la libre transcription, dans l'imagination d'un artiste, des scènes évoqués par les vers d'un autre artiste, sans nul souci de reproduire le cadre, les costumes ou les attitudes que l'on aurait vus au théâtre, si l'oeuvre y avait été représentée.'[1]

The publication of the text was followed very quickly by the first production. Presumably the idea was revived by Jean Coquelin who was the only member of the original cast to play his part. The illustrations to the text led to Barbier's being commissioned to design the costumes.

This costume, like all the others, is pastiche eighteenth century. The costumes for the 'living' characters, Don Juan and Sganarelle, had bold patterns in strong colours to stand out against and contrast with the 'shadows'. The silver and pale purple, under the lighting on stage, would have had exactly the right shadowy effect. The large flowers, an idea repeated on other costumes for the 'shadows', and the hat in black would have given that necessary touch of substance to an insubstantial character. 'Les costumes mi-réels mi-chimériques sont merveilleux.'[2]

In 1919 Barbier had designed the costumes for *Casanova*, also by Edmond Rostand, in which his evocation of the eighteenth century had been particularly successful. But the personal interpretation of his favourite period was based on serious research in his own large library of contemporary books and manuscripts as well as in the Bibliothèque Nationale. When he consulted the books he said: '. . . je sens bruire entre les pages l'âme de tous les artisans de jadis qui viennent souriants me confier leurs secrets.'[3] Like all great artists, however, he did not slavishly copy the work of a previous century in order to repeat it with historical exactitude; he recreated it in his own way for his own time. Barbier's view of the eighteenth century was for the 1920s.

Notes
1 de Beauplan, Robert, *L'Illustration* (Paris, 5 February 1921), p. 101
2 de Flers, Robert, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 13 March 1922)
3 Nova-Casa, 'Chez George Barbier', *La Volonté* (Paris, 14 February 1926)

GEORGE
BARBIER
1921

[25] 1 *One of the illustrations for the text of La Dernière Nuit de Don Juan. Reproduced in L'illustration (Paris, 5 February 1921) (National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

Monsieur Beaucaire

Film adapted from the novel by Booth Tarkington and the play by Booth Tarkington and Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland

Screenplay: Forrest Halsey
Sets: Charles Urban
Costumes: George Barbier
Photography: Harry Fischbeck
Producer: Sidney Olcott
Company: Paramount

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, duc de Chartres: Rudolph Valentino
Princesse Henriette de Bourbon: Bebe Daniels
The Queen of France: Lois Wilson
The King of France: Lowell Sherman
Madame de Pompadour: Paulette Duval
Richelieu: John Davison
Lady Mary Carlisle: Doris Kenyon
Beau Nash: H. Cooper Cliffe
The Duke of Winterset: Ian MacLaren

Released: 1924

FIRST PERFORMANCE OF THE PLAY IN ENGLAND
Comedy Theatre, London, 21 January 1903 with Lewis Waller as Monsieur Beaucaire

Synopsis
The action takes place in France at the court of Louis XV and in England during the reign of James II.

The Duke of Chartres, stung by the taunts of the rebellious Princess Henriette, refuses the King's command to marry her. Madame de Pompadour, full of rancour and jealous hatred, forces the young Duke into exile in England where, assuming the name of 'Monsieur Beaucaire' he passes himself off as the French Ambassador's barber. At Bath he is fascinated by the celebrated beauty Lady Mary Carlisle and wants to meet her. Catching the Duke of Winterset cheating at cards he forces him to introduce him as a mythical duke. Winterset, however, has his thugs attack him and expose him as the barber. Lady Mary turns him down. The arrival of the French Ambassador with a pardon reveals Beaucaire as the real Duke of Chartres. He coldly shuns Lady Mary and, realising his real love for Princess Henriette, he returns to her and takes her in his arms.

George Barbier

26 Design for Rudolph Valentino's costume as Monsieur Beaucaire

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and gold paint (on card)
26.4 × 20 cm
Signed in ink: George Barbier
Undated

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 125(i)

Literature
A R.B., 'Les Maquettes de George Barbier pour le Film "Monsieur Beaucaire"', *L'Illustration* (Paris, 21 February 1925), ill. p. 169
B *Motion Picture* (August 1924), pp. 30–31
The New York Times, 'Fine story in shadow form' (New York, 10 August 1924), section VII, p. 2
The New York Times, 'Monsieur Beaucaire' (New York, 12 August 1924), p. 12
The New York Times, 'Love in the Movies' (New York, 17 August 1924), section VII, p. 2
Sewell, C.S., 'Monsieur Beaucaire' , *Moving Picture World* (New York, 23 August 1924), p. 650
The Times, 'Monsieur Beaucaire as a film' (London, 4 September 1924), p. 8
Picturegoer, vol. 8, no. 46 (London, October 1924)
Picturegoer, vol. 8, no. 47 (London, November 1924)

Barbier had a Hollywood idea of the eighteenth century. His passion for it made him stylise and glamorise it in his designs. His costumes are always an overstatement of reality. He keeps his toes on a base of historical accuracy but allows himself to spring into exaggerated fantasy. The exaggeration is necessary, however, if the costume is to 'read' in the theatre, where it is seen from a distance, or on film, where it is only in monochrome. The fantasy is never coarse or vulgar.

It is now no longer possible to appreciate how a small-screen, black and white, silent movie could be spectacular. But *Monsieur Beaucaire* was designed to be another extravagantly romantic vehicle for the already legendary Valentino. The spectacle was achieved not just by that famous profile but also by the grandiose sets which, at that time, all had to be built in a studio. 'Une armée d'ouvriers de tous les corps de métier: charpentiers, maçons, plombiers, éléctriciens, peintres, travailla à édifier les décors qui couvrent, à un certain moment, une surface de 15,500 metres carrés. Il a fallu reproduire, entre autres, le parc du Château de Versailles, avec ses bassins.'[1] There was also the feast of costumes, 'Les trois cents costumes, pour la plupart executés à Paris, ont coûté plus d'un million de francs et consommé 7,000 mètres de tissus.'[2]

Barbier was chosen as costume designer for the film after Valentino and his wife, Natacha Rambova, had seen his designs for *Casanova* in Paris during their honeymoon.[3] This design, made in 1923, is one of many for Valentino. In the making of the costume it became even more elaborate: the stockings were also embroidered with flowers (fig. 3). Barbier's delicate shades of pinks, greys, blues, greens and pastel yellows inspired by Boucher and Nattier are lost on film. But the bold designs and the different textures convey that sumptuous unreality which Hollywood always tried to achieve. This production[4] was a total success in one respect. As one critic wrote: 'Although the film version of *Monsieur Beaucaire* is entitled to full marks for the splendour of the settings and the extraordinary beauty of the costumes, the narrative itself is set forth without much subtlety, leaving little to the imagination.'[5] Another critic, however, was even more enthusiastic about the visual effects: 'Exquisite is the word which comes most prominently to mind in attempting to describe *Monsieur Beaucaire* . . . for certainly no picture of greater beauty, artistry, magnificence or pictorial appeal has ever reached the silver screen.'[6]

Notes
1 *L'Illustration* (Paris, 21 February 1925), p. 169
2 *Ibid.*
3 Maginnis, Tara, 'George Barbier', (University of Georgia, 9 December 1985, unpublished), p. 9
4 The film was remade in 1946 with Bob Hope as Monsieur Beaucaire
5 *New York Times*, 'Love in the Movies' (New York, 17 August 1924), section VII, p. 2
6 Sewell, C.S., *Moving Picture World* (New York, 23 August 1924), p. 650

GEORGE
BARBIER

1

1 Bebe Daniels as Henriette de Bourbon and Rudolf Valentino as Louis-Philippe d'Orléans in Monsieur Beaucaire. (National Film Archive, London)

2

2 The park of Versailles in the studio for Monsieur Beaucaire (National Film Archive, London)

3 Bebe Daniels and Rudolf Valentino in Monsieur Beaucaire. Valentino is wearing the embroidered stockings. (National Film Archive, London)

3

George Barbier

27 Design for the costume of a Negro in the eighteenth-century style

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour, gold and silver paint (laid down with mount)
19.7 × 14.4 cm (within mount)
Signed in ink: G.B
Undated

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 130

1 Anonymous costume design for a Negro in an eighteenth-century ballet (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

2 Anonymous costume design for a Shepherd in the one-act eighteenth-century ballet Les Petits Riens by Noverre to music by Mozart (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

G.B

George Barbier

28 Design for the costume of a Negress in the eighteenth-century style

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour, gold and silver paint (laid down with mount)
19.7 × 14.4 cm (within mount)
Signed in ink: G.B
Undated

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 130

3 Anonymous costume design for a Negress in an eighteenth-century ballet (Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris)

4 Anonymous costume design for a Shepherdess in the one-act eighteenth-century ballet Les Petits Riens by Noverre to music by Mozart (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

These two designs are from a sketchbook. They were made in the early '20s but were not for the theatre. They could possibly have been for costumes for the *Bal du Grand Prix*, a grand occasion at the Opéra in Paris on 24 June 1922 to which Bakst also contributed some designs and which had an eighteenth-century setting. It is more likely, however, that Barbier made these drawings as an *aide mémoire* after studying some eighteenth-century ballet costume designs at the Biblio-

G.B

thèque Nationale (figs 1–4). In some ways he has imitated the style of the earlier designs – the dash of paint from the foot on the imaginary floor is particularly characteristic – but they could only have been drawn by Barbier. They are full of life and vigour and although they are quick, even rather sketchy, drawings they have been done with care and attention to decorative detail. Barbier himself said: 'Quand il s'agit de reconstituer un costume, que de recherches amusantes nous sommes obligés de faire! Remarquez bien que j'envisage même pas ici, le costume en lui-mème, mais ces mille petits détails qui sont la griffe de l'époque ou du milieu.'[1] They are finished drawings and Barbier was satisfied with them because he initialled them, but the line left imprecise means that they were not intended for reproduction. Both designs at one time had an inscription in pencil in the top right corner which has been erased and is now unfortunately illegible.

Barbier's work is always based on a clear knowledge and understanding of the eighteenth century which he then transformed into his own unique view of it. 'Il descend tout naturellement, je ne dirai pas du XVIIIe siècle, mais de tout un aspect du XVIIIe siècle . . . Il a eu à cette époque une sorte d'esprit particulier que je retrouve entièrement dans l'art de George Barbier. C'est ce que j'appelle l'esprit de conte, de conte à la fois galant et féerique.'[2] Barbier revived the spirit of the eighteenth century in a romantic way. For him it was glamorous and 'rose-tinted' and his luxurious costumes, especially for the Folies-Bergère, reflected this view.

Notes
1 Nova-Casa, 'Chez George Barbier', *La Volonté* (Paris, 14 February 1926)
2 Jaloux, Edmond, *25 costumes pour le théâtre* (Paris, 1927)

Pikovaya Dama (The Queen of Spades)

Opera in three acts and seven scenes by
Piotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky

Based on the story by Alexander Pushkin

Libretto: Modest Ilyitch Tchaikovsky
Director: Alexandre Benois and Emil Cooper
Choreographer: L.S. Leontiev
Sets and costumes: Alexandre Benois
Chorus master: Emil Cooper

PRINCIPAL SINGERS
Herman: A. Ulianov
Count Tomsky: V.A. Seliakh
Prince Yeletsky: V. Slivinsky
The Countess: N.M. Kalinina
Lisa: V. Pavlovskaya

FIRST PERFORMANCE OF REVIVAL
State Academic Theatre for Opera and Ballet, Petrograd, 3 May 1921[1]

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg, 19 December 1890

Note
1 Private performance for the Union of Soviets

Synopsis

The action takes place in St Petersburg about 1800.

ACT I, SCENE 1 A park. Two officers discuss their concern for their colleague Herman who has a passion for gambling. He is too poor to gamble but he drinks too much. The officers leave. Herman comes in with Count Tomsky. Herman tells him that he is in love with a girl but does not know her name. Herman then discovers that the girl's name is Lisa and betrothed to Prince Yeletsky. Lisa is with her grandmother, a countess, who was once a gambler nicknamed 'The Queen of Spades'. She is said to know the secret of the three cards which always win. She has already told the secret to two people. If she tells it to a third person she knows she will die. Herman longs to know the secret so that he may become rich and marry Lisa.

SCENE 2 Lisa's room. Lisa and her friends are singing and laughing. When they leave she is sad, not sure that she will be happy when she marries. Herman declares his love for her. When the grandmother arrives he hides. When she has gone Lisa falls into his arms.

ACT II, SCENE 1 A ballroom. Prince Yeletsky sings to Lisa while Herman muses on the secret of the cards. An interlude of a shepherdess who prefers a shepherd to a prince. Lisa gives Herman the key to her grandmother's palace and arranges to meet him later.

SCENE 2 The Countess's room. Herman waits for the Countess. When she returns he comes out of hiding and implores her to tell him the secret of the cards. He draws a pistol to threaten her and she dies from the shock. Herman is in despair because he will never know her secret. He sees Lisa at the door. She drives him away accusing him of preferring cards to her love.

ACT III, SCENE 1 Herman's room in the barracks. He reads a letter from Lisa in which she forgives him. The ghost of the Countess appears and tells him to marry Lisa and the secret of the cards will be his: three, seven, ace.

SCENE 2 On the quay of the Neva. Lisa and Herman are reconciled but when he starts to leave for the gambling house she tries to prevent him. He pushes her away. In despair she throws herself into the river and drowns.

SCENE 3 A gambling house. Herman gambles with Prince Yeletsky. He has won with the three and the seven, but instead of the ace turns up the Queen of Spades. The picture on the card becomes the grinning ghost of the Countess. Herman becomes deranged and stabs himself.

Alexandre Benois

29 Design for the set of Act III, scene 2: On the quay of the Neva

Pencil, watercolour and gouache
37.5 × 61.6 cm
Signed in ink: Alexandre Benois
Dated: 1919

Provenance
A. Popoff, Paris
Sotheby's, London, 30 May 1974 lot 18

Literature
B *Petrogradskoe Pravda*, no. 94 (Petrograd, 28 April 1921)

Collections
Leningrad, Lunacharsky Theatre Library
Leningrad, State Russian Musuem
Moscow, Central Pushkin Museum

In his set designs Benois almost always included the characters at a precise point in the action. This scene shows Lisa imploring Herman not to leave her to go gambling. He brings to life his architectural drawing. But in a design for the theatre the inclusion of figures immediately gives the right scale to the scene builder, who can understand the whole set. Besides, squaring up the drawing would spoil it. When a design is approved it is either copied and then squared to the right scale or first covered with tracing paper. It is a realistic set and it would have been painted on a flat cloth to hang quite far down stage in order to be able to change more easily the complex sets behind. Clever painting would keep the realism intact. Russian scene painters were masters of their art and the three-dimensional quality of the design would have been kept on the enormous cloth required for the theatre.

Benois, as well as being a designer for the theatre, was a very distinguished art historian. He was also a student of architecture and he loved St Petersburg. He painted what he saw. St Petersburg does not change (fig. 1), but perhaps the scaffolding is no longer there.

The Mariinsky Theatre opened 2 October 1860. It was renamed in 1920, and was called after S.M. Kirov in 1935. Benois' production of *The Queen of Spades* stayed in the repertoire for fifteen years and was then revived for the centenary celebrations of Tchaikovsky's birth in 1940.

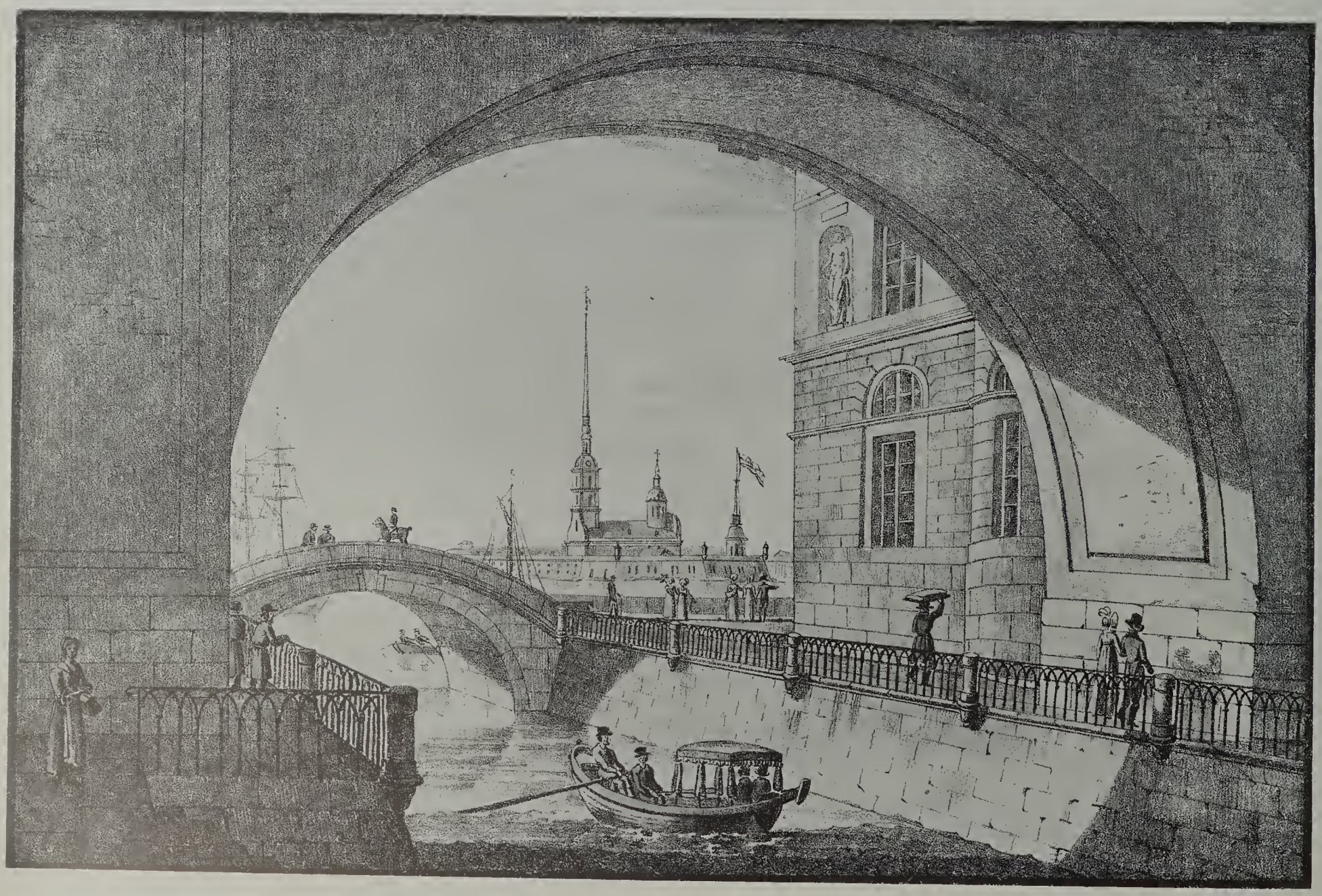
In 1914 Benois designed the sets and costumes for Stravinsky's opera *Le Rossignol* which was presented by Diaghilev at the Opéra, Paris on 26 May.[1] At the outbreak of the First World War Benois and his family were staying at St Jean de Luz and had great difficulty in returning to Russia where he remained throughout the War and after the revolution. From 1918 to 1925 he was the Director of the Paintings Department of the Hermitage Museum. In 1923 he again visited France and designed two comic operas by Gounod, *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* and *Philémon et Baucis*, for Diaghilev.[2] Benois finally left Russia in 1926 and settled in Paris. Diaghilev never returned to Russia and consequently the Ballets Russes never performed there. Benois had been

Notes
1 Based on the fairy story of Hans Christian Andersen, this was Stravinsky's first opera. In 1920 it was revised and produced as the ballet *Le Chant du Rossignol* with sets and costumes by Henri Matisse
2 First performed in January 1924 at the Théâtre de Monte Carlo

one of the founder members of the Ballets Russes and, with Bakst, had been responsible for designing the sets and costumes of their early successes. In 1909 Benois designed *Le Pavillon d'Armide*, in 1910 *Giselle* and in 1911 *Petrushka* [33] when he also became the artistic director of the company. Although Benois and Diaghilev were the greatest of friends they had a love-hate relationship. They admired each other's work but Diaghilev often slighted Benois and Benois would then threaten to resign and have nothing more to do with the company. By 1923 Diaghilev had moved away from Benois' style of stage decoration and was using more avant-garde designers like Picasso, Matisse, Derain, Larionov, Survage and Braque. Benois was not sympathetic to the new movement in theatre design: 'Eh bien! je crois que le cadre d'autrefois était plus "bienveillant" pour les personnages. Maintenant, ils ont l'air d'évoluer dans des chantiers de démolitions. On a peur qu'ils ne se fassent mal. Il vaudrait mieux les remplacer par des automates!'[3] Benois continued in his own charming but now old-fashioned manner and, while still in Russia, designed a number of productions for the Moscow Art Theatre, as well as *The Queen of Spades*. However, his theatre design suited Ida Rubinstein for whose company he worked after he left Russia, particularly the ballets *Les Noces de Psyché*, Ravel's *Boléro* and *La Valse*, Stravinsky's *Le Baiser de la Fée* and *Princesse Cygne* [30].

Note
3 Dardenne, Roger, 'La Décoration Théâtrale, une conversation avec M. Alexandre Benois', *Le Figaro* (Paris, 11 June 1929)

1 On the quay of the Neva, almost identical to Benois' set design, showing the fortress of Peter and Paul in the background and the same iron railing in the foreground. Lithograph in Nouvelle Collection de 42 vues de Saint Pétersburg (A. Pluchart, St Petersburg, 1825) (Private collection)



La Princesse Cygne

Ballet in two scenes by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Based on the same composer's opera *The Story of Tzar Saltan* from the story by Alexander Pushkin

Choreographer: Bronislava Nijinska
Sets and costumes: Alexandre Benois
Conductor: Walther Straram
Company: Ida Rubinstein

PRINCIPAL DANCERS
La Princesse Cygne: Ida Rubinstein
Prince Guidon: Anatole Wiltzak

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre national de l'Opéra, Paris, 29 November 1928

FIRST PERFORMANCE OF THE OPERA
Solodovnkikov Theatre, Moscow, 3 November 1900

Synopsis
SCENE 1 During a storm Prince Guidon, the son of the Tzar Saltan, is cast with his mother on a strange shore. Mermaids have come out of their grotto and, dressed in green, with trailing silver seaweed, dance like the waves. The arrival of the Prince puts them to flight. Guidon meanwhile has seen a vulture fly off with a swan in its claws. With two arrows from his bow he kills the vulture. The swan, which drops on the shore, is an enchanted bird. It sends Guidon to sleep and gives him a wonderful dream.
SCENE 2 In a Russian city the people come to crown him as their king. The rescued swan is changed into a beautiful princess and the son of Tzar Saltan marries her.

Alexandre Benois

30 Design for the set of scene 2: The miraculous apparition of the town Ledenez

Pencil, watercolour and gouache
44 × 61 cm
Signed in pencil: Alexandre Benois
Undated
Inscribed in pencil: 'Princesse Cygne. III tableau'

Provenance
The Hon. James Smith, London
Gregory Frumkin, London
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 16

Exhibitions
London, Storran Gallery, *Alexandre Benois*, 1936, no. 72
Edinburgh, College of Art, *The Diaghilev Exhibition*, August–September 1954 (not in catalogue)

Literature
B Vuillermoz, Emile, *Excelsior* (Paris, 3 December 1928)
Brunel, Raoul, *L'Oeuvre* (Paris, 4 December 1928)
Malherbe, Henry, *Le Temps* (Paris, 5 December 1928)

Although this design is inscribed as being for the third scene the ballet was only in two scenes. This is the golden, joyous, nuptual set in total contrast to the dark, rocky, stormy set of the first scene. This was a magic transformation scene. 'Puis la scène change et nous voyons surgir peu à peu une ville merveilleuse où toutes les maisons sont des palais. La machinerie de l'Opéra s'est tiré fort habilement de cette substitution progressive de décors et nous a prouvé ainsi tout ce qu'il était permis de lui demander.'[1] The background was not one cloth but came down in several stages so that the transformation from one scene to the next was gradual. Theatre, particularly fairy story theatre, has to have magic effects. The audience should be unaware of the technique but should gasp at the effect. A design freezes the action but the set on stage, in combination with the lighting, achieves the desired effect. The appearance of this set in the theatre was obviously startling. 'Mais le spectacle est magnifique. Par des moyens très simples empreintés à la technique de vieille féerie du Châtelet, Benois a réalisé des effets d'une poésie et d'une grandeur étonnante.'[2]

It is fairy tale Russia and fairy tales have a symmetry about them. Benois has organised his setting symmetrically but the two sides are not quite the same. This makes the whole scene more believable, more real. He has also drawn real buildings. The shapes are all from existing churches – except for the fairly tale touch of the swan on the centre cupola. A wedding, however, is above all a religious ceremony and Benois has interpreted the architecture in the manner of icon painting (fig. 1). This gives his design the desired solemnity; the colour gives the joy in spite of the name of the town being derived from the Russian word for 'ice'. Benois has also brought the whole scene to life with his figures. With this design Benois has given us the *frisson* of anticipated excitement. It must have been wonderful.

Notes
1 Brunel, Raoul, *L'Oeuvre* (Paris, 4 December 1928), cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
2 Vuillermoz, Emile, *Excelsior* (Paris, 3 December 1928), cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)

[30] 1 *Icon of the Exaltation of the Cross. Latter half of the sixteenth century (Zagorsk State Art Museum)*

[30] 2 *Ida Rubinstein as Princesse Cygne in a costume designed by Alexandre Benois. Reproduced from an unidentified cutting, c.1931 before her first appearance at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

[30] 3 *Ida Rubinstein as Princesse Cygne, 1928 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)*

1

2

3

Les Deux Tisserands

Comedy sketch in four scenes by Jean-Louis Brousse adapted from the fairy story by Hans Christian Andersen

Director: Georges Lampin
Sets and costumes: Alexandre Benois
Incidental music: Konstantinoff

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
The King: Marcel Vallée
Ministers: Blancard, Palau, Carloff
The two weavers: Pasquali, Georges Fells

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre Marigny, Paris, 6 December 1940

Synopsis
The comedy sketch is based on *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Hans Christian Andersen.
SCENE 1 A King who is excessively fond of new clothes is visited by two men pretending to be weavers. They persuade him that they can make him a marvellous new attire which will remain invisible to all those who are unfit for their office and to all simpletons.
SCENE 2 Ministers come to inspect the work of the pretended weavers who have asked for the most precious silks, brocades and gold thread with which to make the costume for the King. They hide the cloths and the thread in their knapsacks and actually weave nothing at all. But the Ministers dare not say that they see nothing being woven on the looms.
SCENE 3 The weavers come to dress the King in his new clothes but he also dares not say that he sees nothing and expresses his total admiration and satisfaction with his new costume.
SCENE 4 It is the day of the grand parade in the town square before the King's subjects. As the King goes past with Ministers holding his train they all remain silent except for a small boy who says: 'But the King is naked.' By his innocent frankness he unmasks the whole preposterous hierarchy.

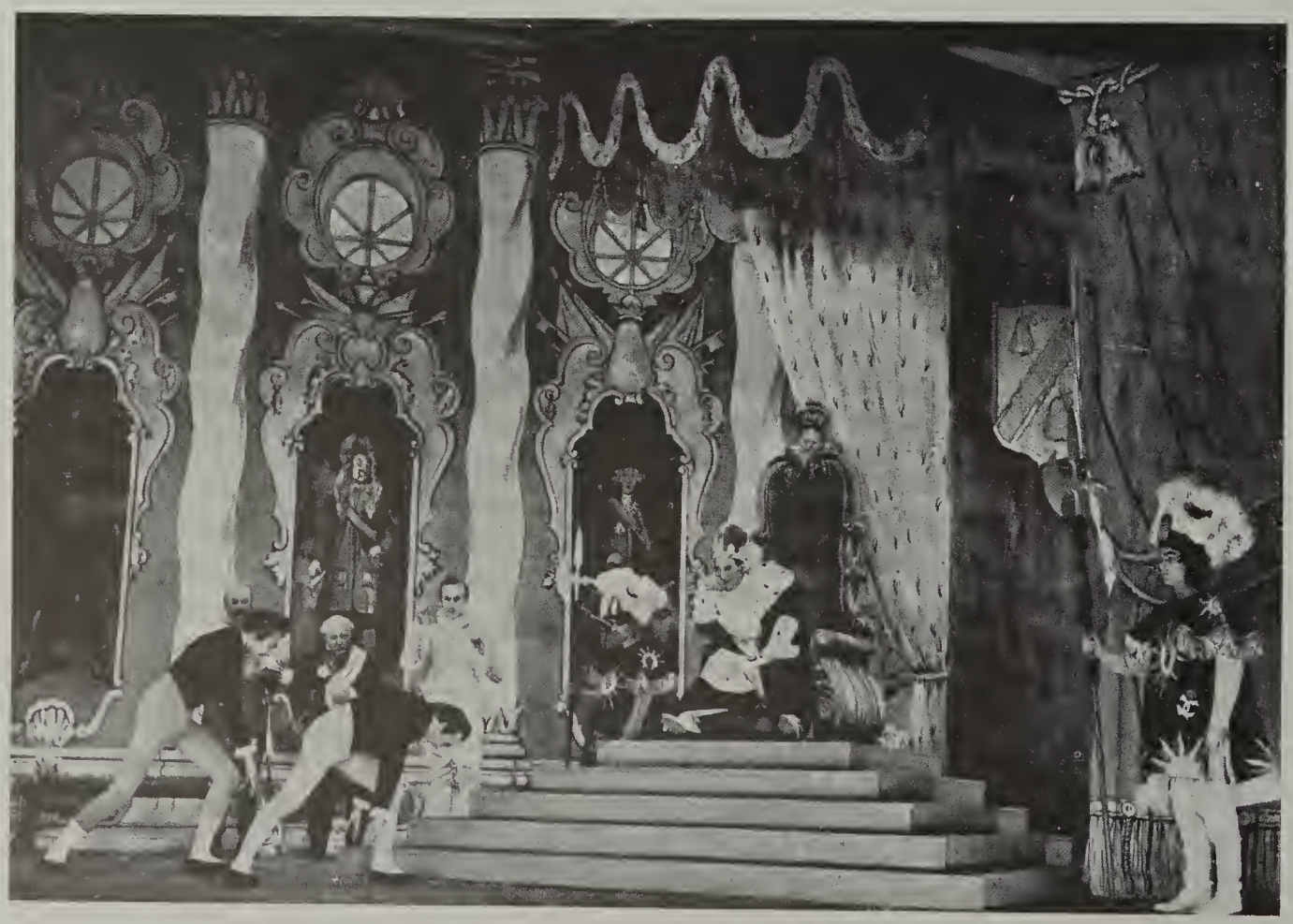
Alexandre Benois

31 Design for the set of scene 1

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and gouache
27.8 × 38.4 cm
Signed in ink: Alexandre Benois
Dated: 1940
Inscribed in ink: 'le Tisserand "le Roi Nu"'
Signed on verso: Alexandre Benois
Inscribed on verso: 'le 2 Tisserands/à Morison/xi 1940/Act 1'

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 62

Literature
B R.S., 'Les Baladins' au Théâtre Marigny', *Les Nouveaux Temps* (Paris, 8 December 1940)
Laurent, Jean, 'La Danse au Théâtre Marigny', *Les Nouveaux Temps*, (Paris, 11 December 1940)
E.G., 'Variétés', *Le Petit Parisien* (Paris, 11 December 1940)
Rabette, 'Au Théâtre Marigny', *France Soir* (Paris, 12 December 1940)
Dardenne, Roger, 'La Décoration Théâtrale, une conversation avec M. Alexandre Benois', *Le Figaro* (Paris, 11 June 1929)



1 The first scene of Les Deux Tisserands on the stage of the Marigny Theatre. Reproduced from an unidentified cutting (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

Alexandre
Benois - 1940

Alexandre Benois

32 Design for the set of scene 4

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and gouache
27.8 × 38.4 cm
Signed in ink: Alexandre Benois
Undated
Inscribed in ink: 'Toile de fond de la dernière scène de 'Holht Neuf du Roi' (les Tisserands) au Yonne 1940'
Inscribed on verso: 'Alexandre Benois/les 2 Tisserants/Acte IV/Toile de fond pour la version/définitive 1940'

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 63

Benois has usually been credited with designing a production in 1940 called *Les Baladins* but this is not accurate. This was the title given to a whole evening's entertainment and Benois was only responsible for the designs of one of the 'numbers' in it called *Les Deux Tisserands*. The whole programme was as follows:

1 *Ouverture:* the abduction from the Seraglio by Mozart
2 *Princesse Turandot*: ballet inspired by Gozzi
with Darsonval and Victor Gsovsky
3 *Daumier*: 3 scenes by Touchagues
with Jacqueline Francell, Broutelle, Blancard, Vitsoris, Georges Fells
4 *Capriccio* after Goya
with Barbara Nikisch, Darsonval, Victor Gsovsky
sets and costumes by Nathalie Gontcharova
5 *Les Bavards* by Cervantes
with Marcel Vallée, Palau, Pasquali, H. Dassonville, Blancard and Vitsoris
6 *Légende*
ballet with Yvette Chauviré and Boris Kniaseff
7 *Les Deux Tisserands*
8 *Piccoli*
ballet with Yvette Chauviré and Boris Kniaseff
9 *Tambour Battant*
ballet with Barbara Nikisch
set and costumes by Touchagues
10 *Offrande Pathétique*
choir directed by M. Afonsky

The first performance was a Grand Gala organised by *Le Petit Parisien* for the benefit of L'Entraide d'Hiver founded by Marshal Pétain. It lasted more than three hours and was slightly chaotic. Neither the set nor the costumes were ready for *Tambour Battant* but Georges Lampin,

the director, had only thought of the idea for the whole show a few months before on 21 June. In general it was very well received and it soon settled down. The sets in particular were praised: '. . . les splendides décors de Touchagues, d'A. Benois et de Gontcharova n'ont rien à envier à ceux de Bakst, de Matisse et de Picasso.'[1] The main criticism was that it was a bit of a hodge-podge. 'Il manque à la tête un Diaghilew, un animateur, un gentilhomme de l'art, qui aurait réuni autour de lui les plus grandes peintres, les plus grands musiciens, les plus grands poètes de notre époque.'[2] The programme followed the pattern of comedy sketches, ballets and musical numbers which had been set by the Chauve-Souris company in Paris in the '20s (see Nicolas Benois, pp.159ff.). *Les Baladins* was not a revue like the spectacular but frivolous shows at the Folies-Bergère or the Casino de Paris, but was meant to be a 'serious' entertainment involving the talents of 'sincere' artists. It was nevertheless mounted in a much more lavish way than the shows which had been presented by the Chauve-Souris company and drew this ironic comment from one of the critics: 'Et les acteurs, les danseurs, les chanteurs, les musiciens de l'orchestre, les machinistes, les habilleuses qui y trouvent chaque soir leur emploi sont plus de cent cinquante. C'est ainsi que le théâtre, sans que l'on y en doute, peut être suffisamment coopère à la reprise économique.'[3] More than fifty actors took part in *Les Deux Tisserands*, most of them in the last scene.

Although there were four scenes there were only three sets. The design inscribed 'Act 1' was also for scene 3. All the sets were painted backcloths. In a show lasting over three hours with ten different items and each requiring at least one set the only practical way of changing the scene is by using painted backcloths (or plain curtains) and a minimum of furniture and props. In the first and third scenes there was also the King's rostrum which, as shown in the production photograph, had to be moved further up-stage in the theatre than Benois had drawn in his design with the effect that the heraldic shield behind the King's throne is seen to be in the wrong place. It is extremely unlikely that Benois would have made such a mistake and the explanation must be that the rostrum had to be moved for the camera. Because film then was not fast enough for normal theatre lighting, productions were always photographed at a special 'photo call' and not during performance. The front border shown in the design but not in the photograph was probably left out of the production. In the second scene there was also the loom and in the last scene there was only the backcloth.

Les Deux Tisserands was an ideal little comedy for Benois to illustrate. His talents exactly matched the sets required and these designs are the essence of Benois as a designer for the theatre.

The design for scene 1 again (as in *The Queen of Spades*) captures a moment in the action and we sense through the figures the whole atmosphere of the play: the false obsequiousness of the weavers, the haughty vanity of the Ministers and the pathetic silliness of the King. The background, with the King's ancestors in differently ornate gilt frames and the barley-sugar columns, has been designed with just the right amount of ostentation and witty charm needed for this fairy story. This design already makes one smile and by all accounts it was a very funny scene. Benois left the design for the last scene unfinished on purpose. As usual he began to draw in some figures to bring life to the set but did not paint them in because they would have interfered too much with the background for the scene painter to interpret correctly. This was a very crowded scene on stage and so he has deliberately designed the architecture to be visible above the crowd. Benois was an architectural historian and always got the details right in his designs so it is very likely that this town exists but, so far, it has not been possible to identify it. But while the town may indeed exist the design is an interpretation which is exactly right for Hans Christian Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes* which, as *Les Deux Tisserands*, had the description in the programme: 'aimable féerie pour petits et grands.' Benois said: '. . . il faut que les sens soient flattés au spectacle.'[4] In his work for the theatre Benois always followed this principle. He was not an innovator but he always created settings and costumes which were a total delight to the eye.

Notes

1 Laurent, Jean, *Les Nouveaux Temps* (Paris, n.d.), cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)

2 *Ibid.*

3 de B., R., *L'Illustration* (Paris, 21 December 1940), cutting (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

4 Dardenne, Roger, 'La Décoration Théâtrale, une conversation avec M. Alexandre Benois', *Le Figaro* (Paris, 11 June 1929)

Petrushka

Burlesque ballet in four scenes by Igor Stravinsky and Alexandre Benois

Composer: Igor Stravinsky

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION
Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, 13 June 1911

Choreographer: Michel Fokine
Set and costumes: Alexandre Benois
Conductor: Pierre Monteux
Company: Les Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev

PRINCIPAL DANCERS
The Ballerina: Tamara Karsavina
Petrushka: Vaslav Nijinsky
The Moor: Alexandre Orlov
The Showman: Enrico Cecchetti

Synopsis

SCENE 1 Admiralty Square, St Petersburg. The Shrovetide fair of 1830. A crowd is enjoying the fair. A drumroll heralds the appearance of the Showman from behind a curtained booth. The curtains open to reveal three puppets: a Moor, a Ballerina and Petrushka. At a command from the Showman, the puppets dance. The Moor and Petrushka are in love with the Ballerina. She prefers the Moor. Petrushka, jealous, attacks the Moor. The Showman ends the performance. The puppets collapse motionless.

SCENE 2 Petrushka's room. Petrushka is kicked into the room by the Showman. He tries in vain to escape. The Ballerina appears. Petrushka expresses his love awkwardly. The Ballerina does not respond, and leaves him alone in despair.

SCENE 3 The Moor's room. The Moor, alone, is playing with a coconut. The Ballerina enters and dances to excite him. He embraces her. Petrushka enters and threatens the Moor. He chases Petrushka away.

SCENE 4 Admiralty Square (the same as scene 1 but later). The crowd is still dancing. Suddenly Petrushka rushes out of his booth, chased by the Moor brandishing a scimitar. The Moor stabs and kills Petrushka. A policeman arrives, but the Showman picks up the body and to everyone's relief shows that Petrushka was only a puppet. The Showman is left alone holding the puppet. As he goes back towards the booth the ghost of Petrushka appears above it and threatens the Showman and everyone else for refusing to believe that he is just a puppet.

Alexandre Benois

33 Design for the set of scene 3: The Moor's room

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and gouache
27 × 40 cm
Signed in pencil: Alexandre Benois
Dated: IV ? 1956

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 50

Literature
B Benois, Alexandre, 'The story behind Petrushka' (extract from *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet*), *Dance and Dancers* (London, March 1957)
Illustrated London News (London, 30 March 1957), production photographs by Houston Rogers
Williams, Peter, 'Petrushka – Decor', *Dance and Dancers* (London, May 1957)

Collections
SET AND COSTUME DESIGNS
Hartford, Connecticut, Wadsworth Atheneum
Leningrad, State Russian Museum
Leningrad, Theatre Museum
London, Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum
Paris, Musée de l'Opéra

Petrushka is the most famous ballet produced by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Others may have been more sensational – *Schéhérazade* – or original – *Parade* – or controversial – *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, but, of all the ballets, *Petrushka* alone is still in the repertoire of most of the large ballet companies throughout the world. It is a good story, Stravinsky's music is attractive and poignant, and there are four big parts for dancers giving them an opportunity to dazzle an audience with their mastery of technique in both dancing and mime, an opportunity which is rare for male dancers in the 'classical' repertoire. But another reason for the instant success of *Petrushka* was the designs by Benois, and one of the main reasons for its continued success is that between 1911 and 1957 Benois designed fourteen different productions.[1] Benois, more than anyone else, became identified with *Petrushka*. Only in 1977 did Maurice Béjart give a completely new interpretation of the ballet.

The irony is that Benois nearly did not design *Petrushka* at all. In a letter to Diaghilev[2] he wrote: 'It is not too late for you to find someone else to replace me to finish the production of *Petrushka*. What about Sapunov or Soudeikine?' Benois and Diaghilev made up their differences and Benois later forgot to mention in his *Reminiscences* that he ever thought of not doing the designs.[3]

Notes
1 See Chronology
2 Letter dated 31 January 1911, St Petersburg from Benois to Diaghilev (State Russian Museum, Leningrad). Published in Zilberstein I.S., *Sergei Diaghilev i Russkoe Iskusstvo (Serge Diaghilev and Russian art)* 2 vols (Moscow, 1982)
3 Benois, Alexandre, *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet* (London, 1941)

Benois' designs for all his productions of *Petrushka* are broadly similar in style and scenic arrangement. The differences are subtle and slight. The greatest variations in detail occur in the designs for the Moor's room. This scene (as is scene 2) is always set within the false proscenium for scenes 1 and 4. The two walls always have the same angle, there are always palm trees. But the palm trees change in different productions. In the first production the palm trees are olive green against a red sky; there are huge bunches of dates, and enormous, deep red and pink peony-like flowers; a green skirting with prancing white rabbits.[4] In later productions the palm trees are more defined, bright green against a mauve sky with monkeys sitting on top of them, exotic birds and butterflies flying in the sky with the skirting becoming a jungle with snakes and heads of tigers peering over the top;[5] or dark green palm trees against a yellow sky with cacti and scorpions.[6] There is always a square door and a large divan with plush cushions. In the first production[4] the decoration on the door is a six-point star set into a hexagon surrounded by a square border. In other productions[5,6] the star has been replaced by a twisted snake (fig. 1).

In the Thyssen design, made at the age of eighty-six, four years before his death, Benois still recalls his first production. It has been assumed that this design is for The Royal Ballet's production of 1957[7] because it was done the year before. But this is not so as can be seen from the photograph of that production (fig. 2). Benois certainly made designs for The Royal Ballet

Notes

4 Photograph of Karsavina, Orlov and Nijinsky in first production reproduced in Schouvaloff, Alexander and Borovsky, Victor, *Stravinsky on stage* (London, 1982) and a design which is practically identical in Beaumont, Cyril W., *Five centuries of ballet design* (London, n.d.)

5 Design for 1920 production reproduced in *Teatr Operi i Baleta imeni S.M. Kirov (The Kirov opera and ballet Theatre)* (Leningrad, 1983)

6 Design reproduced in Vlasova, R.I., *Russkoe teatralno-dekoratziomoe iskusstvo nachala XX veka (Russian theatre design of the early twentieth century)* (Leningrad, 1984). This design is wrongly attributed to the 1911 production. It is more likely to be design for the 1920 production at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow

7 Gala performance in the presence of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and HRH Princess Margaret in aid of The Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London with Margot Fonteyn as the Ballerina, Alexander Grant as Petrushka, Peter Clegg as the Moor and Frederick Ashton as the Showman. It is curious that The Royal Ballet waited so long before staging *Petrushka*

1 *Set design for scene 3: The Moor's room in Petrushka, c.1921*

2 *Margot Fonteyn as the Ballerina and Peter Clegg as the Moor in the 1957 Royal Ballet production of Petrushka. Photograph by Houston Rogers (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

2

but they were different. For the production he continued to experiment with his 'variations on a theme' and developed them into something even more abstract than usual. This unfinished drawing (the floor and part of the door have been left unpainted), remembering 1911, was most likely intended to be a present.

It is often difficult to date the designs Benois made for *Petrushka* and, in particular, the costume designs for the Ballerina and Petrushka himself. Karsavina and Nijinsky so identified themselves with the parts in Benois' mind, and were so successful in their original interpretations that Benois often used to inscribe later drawings 'Karsavina' or 'Nijinsky' and date them firmly '1911'. Most of the original designs for the first production are inscribed in Russian and are either in the State Russian Museum or in the Theatre Museum in Leningrad. Quite a number of the later drawings (fig. 3) were never made for productions but for exhibitions or to be given to friends.

3 *Another version for scene 3, 1956*

Amour et Hiérarchie

Sketch devised by Nikita Balieff

Libretto: Piotr Potemkin
Set and costumes: Nicolas Benois
Composer: Alexis Archangelsky
Company: Nikita Balieff's 'Chauve-Souris'

PRINCIPAL SINGERS
Mme Fechner, Mikhail Dalmatoff, Ermoloff, Gorodetsky, Marievsky and Stoianovsky

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre Fémina, Paris, 1 October 1924

Synopsis
A buffoonery of old St Petersburg.
A charming young woman is sitting outside the barracks. A drummer boy, a sergeant major, a lieutenant and a colonel arrive. Each in turn obliges his inferior to yield him his place in accordance with the established discipline of military rank. Finally a general appears, reconciles them all, and emerges victorious with the lady on his arm.

Nicolas Benois

34 Design for Mikhail Dalmatoff's costume as the General

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and gouache (laid down with mount)
47.3 × 32.8 cm (within mount)
Signed in pencil in Russian: Nikolai Benois
Dated: 1925
Inscribed in pencil: 'Chauve Souris/de/Nikita Balieff'
Inscribed in pencil over-written in watercolour in Russian: 'Liubov po chinam/General'
(Love in the ranks/General)

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 113(i)

Literature
B Znosko-Borovsky, Eugene, 'Quelques jeunes décorateurs russes', *L'Oeuvre*(Paris, Winter 1924–25), pp. 54–55
Schneider, Louis, *Le Gaulois* (Paris, 2 October 1924)
Boissy, Gabriel, *Comoedia* (Paris, 2 October 1924)
Sordet, Dominique, *Action Française* (Paris, 9 June 1925)
Chudovsky, Valerian, *Apollon*, no. 4 (St Petersburg, 1913), pp. 55–57
Casalonga, V.-M., 'Le Théâtre de la Chauve-Souris', *Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, 20 February 1921)
Théâtre de la Chauve-Souris, souvenir programme, 1924–25 season, Théâtre Fémina, Paris
The Observer (London, 18 December 1932)
The Radio Times (London, 16 December 1932)

Любовь по чинамъ
Генераль

Nicolas Benois

35 Design for Mme Fechner's costume as the Young Woman

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour (laid down with mount)
46.2 × 31.8 cm (within mount)
Signed in pencil in Russian: Nikolai Benois
Dated: 1925
Inscribed in pencil in Russian: 'Letuchaya Mish/Balieva' (Balieff's Chauve-Souris)
Inscibed in pencil over-written in watercolour in Russian: 'Barishnya' (The young Woman)
Inscribed in pencil in Russian: 'Parizh' (Paris)

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 113 (ii)

Nicolas Benois had worked with his father, Alexandre, on a production of *Julius Caesar* in 1922. In January 1924 he designed *V tsarstve skuki* (*In the realm of boredom*) in Petrograd. He then left Russia and began to work for Nikita Balieff's Chauve-Souris company. These designs are therefore two examples of his very early work for the theatre. They already show great confidence and feeling for what will look right on stage (fig. 1). Although clearly influenced by his father in style and manner of making a costume design he has a harder, more defined line and a characteristic individuality. Father and son can never be confused. As always with good costume design the part is portrayed as well as the costume: the stout, bossy but ridiculous general with his broken telescope and the demure, apparently vulnerable but actually self-assured young woman peering from under her bonnet are precise interpretations of the character.

Both drawings are later versions of the original designs made in 1924 which were reproduced in the 1924/25 and 1925 souvenir programmes of the Chauve-Souris seasons in Paris (fig. 2). Both versions are the same size and are almost exactly the same in every other detail of the costume. The only marked difference between the two versions is in the inscriptions and the background wash which the earlier drawings do not have.

Amour et Hiérarchie instantly became one of the most successful sketches produced by the company. 'Le chef-d'oeuvre de la soirée, nous réveille.'[1] And Benois' contribution to that success was also recognised: 'C'est *Amour et Hiérarchie* qui déchaine le rire. . . . Rien n'est plus caricaturalement esquissé que cet épisode; costumes et décors sont délicieusement dessinés par Benois.'[2]

It is this element of fun, 'la note ironique et sans exagération caricaturale'[3] which makes these drawings so attractive. Benois was presumably commissioned to make these second versions because of the popularity of the piece.

Notes
1 Boissy, Gabriel, *Comoedia* (Paris, 2 October 1924)
2 Schneider, Louis, *Le Gaulois* (Paris, 2 October 1924)
3 Znosko-Borovsky, Eugene, *L'Oeuvre* (Paris, Winter 1924–25)

Nikita Balieff started the Chauve-Souris company as an off-shoot of the Moscow Art Theatre. He had been a member of the company from its foundation by Stanislavsky and Nemirovitch-Danchenko in 1898 but had only been given non-speaking parts. In 1908 he started a private cabaret in a cellar. One of the first sketches was a parody of Gordon Craig's *Hamlet* which had just been done by the main company. In 1910 Balieff left the Moscow Art Theatre and moved his cabaret to another cellar seating 120 people grouped round tables in front of a stage. The general public was admitted but the main audience was still members of the Moscow Art Theatre company. By 1913 the cabaret was so popular that Balieff was forced to move to another cellar seating 400. This was arranged like a theatre with tables and chairs in an adjoining room. Performances always began at 10 p.m. and the price of admission was higher

Любовь по чинамъ

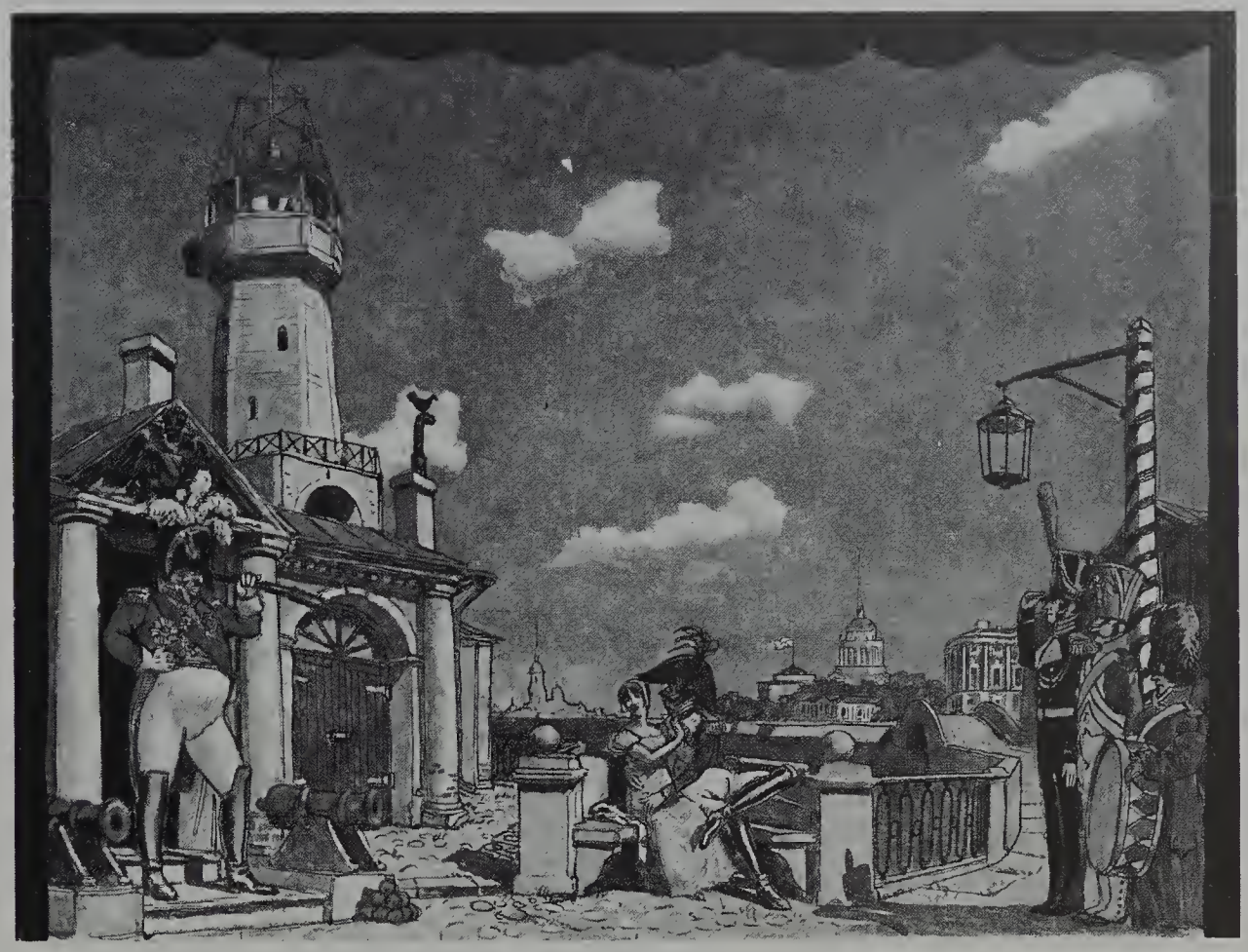
1 Love in the ranks. Reproduced in The Radio Times (London, 16 December 1932) in the Charles B. Cochran Scrapbooks (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

2 Set and costume designs for Amour et Hiérarchie. Reproduced in Chauve-Souris, souvenir programme, 1924–25 season (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

than any other theatre in Moscow. The company disbanded with the revolution in October 1917. Balieff left Russia escaping through Tiflis and Constantinople. He arrived in Paris in 1919, borrowed £100 and re-started his company. His first season in Paris was at the Théâtre Fémina, December 1920–July 1921. The company remained based in Paris but visited London on several occasions,[4] and made extensive tours in the United States.[5] The Chauve-Souris company was called after the bat that fell from the roof into Balieff's hand when he was signing the lease for his first cellar.

'There is probably no other compère in the world with Balieff's genius for bringing an audience into such intimate touch with what is happening on stage. He flatters us and bullies us in his atrocious English, and almost as much as the "numbers" (as he persistently calls his immaculately presented items), we look forward to his introductions. He was wittier than ever at the Cambridge, and everything he said had the air of spontanteity – although I am certain it is as carefully rehearsed as the rest of the programme.'[6]

Notes
4 September–December 1921, November–December 1924, October 1925–March 1926 (London and UK tour), December 1932–March 1933
5 January 1922–May 1923, October 1923–May 1924, February–May 1925, December 1926–May 1927 (and Canada)
6 *Sunday Times* (London, 31 December 1932)



AMOUR ET HIÉRARCHIE

Aquarelles de Nicolas BENOIS fils, pour le décor et les costumes

Lucien Bertaux

36 Design for the costume of a dancer in pink and black

Pencil, indian ink, gouache and watercolour
46.3 × 36.8 cm
Signed in ink: Lucien Bertaux
Undated

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 109

The little hat, the 'Doris Day' look, the slinky black dress and the overtly erotic pose indicate that this is probably a design for a costume for one of the revues at the Casino de Paris where Bertaux worked from the late '40s to the '60s. But as nothing has been written on the front or the back of the drawing it has not been possible to identify it exactly. Designs for particular shows are almost always given some inscription: a title, a character, a stock or location number (see José de Zamora, p.222) or an instruction to the costumier. Designs for costumes are primarily working drawings for the wardrobe to interpret. They are used in a busy workshop and therefore, for the purely practical reason of having to keep track of them, they have an identification mark of some kind. This marking is particularly important in revue where hundreds of costumes may be required for any one show and many more are held in stock. So this design may well not have been used in a production. Indeed, when comparing this drawing with other examples of Bertaux' work (in the collections of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris) which are known to have been for revue, this design is slightly uncharacteristic. Although Bertaux generally used the same techniques of drawing and painting, particularly in the line he used to indicate folds and pleats, this drawing is larger and more carefully finished than a lot of his other designs. So this one may have been done purely for pleasure and just to be enjoyed.

Designers for the revues at all the great music-halls of Paris, the Folies-Bergère, the Casino de Paris, the Moulin Rouge, the Palace, the Olympia, the Concert Mayol and the others, are strangely elusive figures. Theatre critics and even historians concentrate on the stars, Mistinguett, Maurice Chevalier, Joséphine Baker, and the girls. They are often rapturous about the magnificent, gorgeous, spectacular sets and costumes but hardly ever mention the names of the designers who gave them such pleasure. Barbier and Erté are the occasional exceptions. Designers for revue tend to get their only credit in the printed programme and therefore it is very difficult to establish a chronology of the career of any one of them. Lucien Bertaux is a more elusive designer than most and little is known about him. It has been possible to establish, however, that in the early 1940s he worked mostly for the impressario Jo Méhu at the Olympia in Paris. In 1941 he designed *Cirque* and *Boléro* for *Normandie*; *Les Toits de Paris*, *Images 1880* and *Les Saltimbanques* for *Musique 41*, and *Swing 41*; in 1942 *Pâques* and *Rêve de Sèvres* for *Musique 42*; in 1943 *Valses de Paris; valses 1880–1942*, *La Belle Epoque*, *Les Santons*, *La Fête Foraine*, *Pages de Music-Hall*, *Tam-Tam*, *Mosaique* and *Clowneries*. After the War Bertaux worked mostly for the Casino de Paris (including the successful number *L'Embarquement pour Cythère* in 1948). But in 1947 Alec Shanks brought him to London to design the costumes for the revue *Starlight Roof* at the London Hippodrome. The final number, *Starlight Serenade*, included the fourteen-year-old Julie Andrews as the youthful Prima Donna in her first professional appearance on stage. In 1961, with José de Zamora, he designed *Plaisirs* also for the Casino. Bertaux' other work at some time included designing costumes for Joséphine Baker, sets and costumes for a *Divertissment* on the Classical Symphony by Prokofiev and a project for *Salomé* by Richard Strauss for the Ballet de Monte Carlo with choreography by Serge Lifar.

With the compliments of

MARION DAVIES

Christmas, 1920

[37] 3 *Marion Davies. A page from Paramount's Christmas advertising feature in Moving Picture World (25 September 1920) (British Library, London)*

The Restless Sex

Film from the novel by Robert W. Chambers

Director: Robert Z. Leonard
Designer: Joseph Urban
Costumes for *The Ball of the Gods* sequence: Erté
Presenter: Hugo Riesenfeld
Producer: William Randolph Hearst
Company: Cosmopolitan Pictures

STARRING
Marion Davies
SUPPORTING CAST
Ralph Kellard, Carlyle Blackwell, Charles Lane, Robert Vivian, Etna Ross, Stephen Carr, Vivian Osborne, Corinne Baker

RELEASED
Paramount, 1 September 1920

'The story is long and complicated and does not particularly emphasise the supposed restlessness of either sex, but is full of such loving and longing and lingering as usually fill a Chambers novel.'
The New York Times (13 September 1920)

Erté

37 Design for Ralph Kellard's costume as the Caliph in 'The Ball of the Gods' sequence

Pencil, indian ink, gouache, gold and silver paint
27.4 × 23.9 cm
Signed in ink: Erté
Undated
Inscribed on verso in ink: 'Costume de Calife/(pour Cleland)/No 64'
Stamped on verso in ink: 'Erté/Romain de Tirtoff/9 rue de Civry, Paris'
and 'Composition originale'

Provenance
Grosvenor Gallery, London
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 21

Exhibitions
Los Angeles, David Stuart Galleries, *Erté*, 1973
Portland, Oregon, Portland Art Museum, *Erté*, 7 August–1 September 1974, no. 3

Literature
A Spencer, Charles, *Erté* (London, 1970), ill. pl. 130, p. 150
B *The New York Times*, 'The Screen' (New York, 13 September 1920), p. 12
Moving Picture World (New York, 25 September 1920), pp. 458, 529
Moving Picture World (New York, 2 October 1920), p. 606
Salmina-Haskell, Larissa, *Catalogue of Russian Drawings, Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1972), studio copy ill. pl. XII, no. 36

This design made in 1919 when Erté was twenty-seven already shows his own particular genius fully developed. The fine, sure line, the intricacy of the patterns and the exquisitely delicate painting are instantly recognisable hall marks. Erté makes no concessions to the three-dimensional figure; his designs are almost always strictly two-dimensional and yet his figures all appear to have solidity and movement. His early training in fashion drawing, particularly while he was working for Poiret soon after he arrived in Paris, gave him an exact understanding of how different materials drape and hang and how they follow the contours of a body. He uses no shading to indicate the fullness or bulk of the cloth; folds and pleats are drawn in the finest lines. In his autobiography Erté wrote: 'When I was a small boy I had found in my father's library a book containing many reproductions in colour of Indian and Persian miniatures . . . Contrary to what many critics later maintained, it was they, rather than the work of Aubrey Beardsley, that profoundly influenced my ultimate style. I did not discover Beardsley until 1913 when I had already been in Paris for a year. Another formative influence was the painted Greek vases in the Hermitage Museum.'[1] In this particular design the colours, the patterns and the way the hands and face have been drawn are certainly reminiscent of the miniature paintings of Bihzad and his pupils of the Herati school in Persia at the end of the fifteenth century, and Erté's thin, unhesitant line (more apparent in the following design [38]) is certainly derived from the Greek manner. Bakst, too, had studied Persian miniatures (*Schéhérazade* [2]) and Greek art in the Hermitage (*Hippolytus* [1]): Barbier also admitted to being influenced by the vase paintings. They were fashionable influences at the time. But just as Bakst had superimposed his own vision of the 'orient' on to his painting and invented a new 'oriental' style, and Barbier reinterpreted the eighteenth century, so Erté, with the designs for this film heralded the new Art Deco style. *The Restless Sex* was a film in black and white but the illustration shows how effective the costume is without the colour (fig. 1).

1 *Design for Kellard's costume reproduced in black and white as it would have appeared on film*

Note
1 Erté, *Things I Remember* (London/New York, 1975), p. 16

Since 1915 Erté always kept as many of his original drawings as possible and provided costumiers and other technicians with copies made by copy artists trained by him. The original drawing is usually stamped on the back with the words: 'Composition Originale' and the copy with the words: 'Reproduction par Erté de son oeuvre originale'. Sometimes, however, neither the original drawing nor the copy is stamped and the copies are so accurate that they have often been mistaken for the original. There is a studio copy extant of this design in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The number 64 on the verso means that it was the sixty-fourth design made for *The Restless Sex*. Later, Erté began to number all his designs in sequence irrespective of the production for which they were made.

Erté was first commissioned to design costumes for a film by Cecil B. de Mille. The film was *The Prodigal Son* but it was never produced. Erté, at the time, was already under contract to William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper tycoon,[2] to provide cover designs and fashion illustrations for his magazine *Harper's Bazar*.[3] Hearst was annoyed and persuaded Erté to break his contract with de Mille because he was obsessed with making Marion Davies, a chorus girl from the *Ziegfeld Follies* whom he had met in 1917, into the biggest star of the screen. Hearst therefore also decided to employ Erté, whom he had made famous through his magazine, to design the particularly spectacular and sumptuous costumes he wanted for *The Ball of the Gods* sequence in *The Restless Sex*. Charles Spencer writes: 'The detail of the robes is astonishing in inventiveness, precision, erotic suggestion and playful humour. They are not merely designs for dresses; the figures are performers in movement or repose, full of energy, grace or statuesque dignity; without doubt among the finest costume designs of the century.'[4] Although the film broke the box office records for the first few weeks after its release it was unfortunately not distinguished in any other way. 'The restlessness noticed yesterday afternoon was felt by those spectators who like more life and less length than the picture has. Miss Davies does little in the way of acting, and Ralph Kellard and Carlyle Blackwell, as her heroes, do too much.'[5] It was Erté's only work in this medium until 1925. He then spent a frustrating but enjoyable year in Hollywood under contract (six months followed by two periods of three months each) to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. He was engaged to design a romantic film called *Paris* and he made a number of sketches while waiting for a script. When the script was eventually delivered Erté was amazed and appalled to discover that the story was about a French couturier living in the Louvre and that the script-writers had a completely nonsensical notion of Paris. 'They are writing about Paris, Texas', he said, and refused to have anything more to do with the film.[6] Because of the delays over *Paris* Erté was also asked to work on a number of other films at the same time: *The Mystic, Dance Madness, A Little Bit of Broadway, Time the Comedian* and *La Bohème*. He even designed several costumes for the famous epic *Ben Hur*.

Erté's work on *The Restless Sex* had caught the attention of Diaghilev. The production of *The Sleeping Princess* in London, contrary to expectations, had been a financial disaster. Diaghilev found himself deeply in debt to the impressario, Sir Oswald Stoll, and also committed to producing the ballet in Paris in May 1922. Stoll, however, had sequestered all the scenery and costumes which had been designed by Bakst.[7] Diaghilev realised that he could not possibly present the whole ballet, as in London, but persuaded the management of the Opéra to accept a shorter version, the last act, as a ballet called *Le Mariage de la Belle au Bois Dormant* with scenery and costumes for the principals from *Le Pavillon d'Armide* designed by Alexandre Benois and some new costumes for the *Contes de Fées* dances. Diaghilev asked Erté to design these new costumes. Erté was thrilled by the commission and made a few drawings but then Max Weldy, the costumier, offered him the much more lucrative job of designing some revues for New York which Erté accepted with Diaghilev's agreement. But Erté never worked again for Diaghilev who then asked Gontcharova to design the new costumes for *Le Mariage*.[8]

Notes
2 Also the subject of Orson Welles' film *Citizen Kane*
3 Title changed to *Harper's Bazaar* in 1929
4 Spencer, Charles, *Erté* (London 1970), p. 130
5 *The New York Times*, 'The Screen' (New York, 13 September 1920), p. 12
6 The film was eventually made by Edmund Goulding and released in 1926
7 See Bakst *The Sleeping Princess*, p. 77
8 See Gontcharova *Le Mariage de la Belle au Bois Dormant*, p. 197

Don't Be So Restless!

A scene from "The Restless Sex," starring Marion Davies and released by Paramount.

2 *From Moving Picture World (25 December 1920) (British Library, London)*

Erté

38 Design for a velvet evening gown

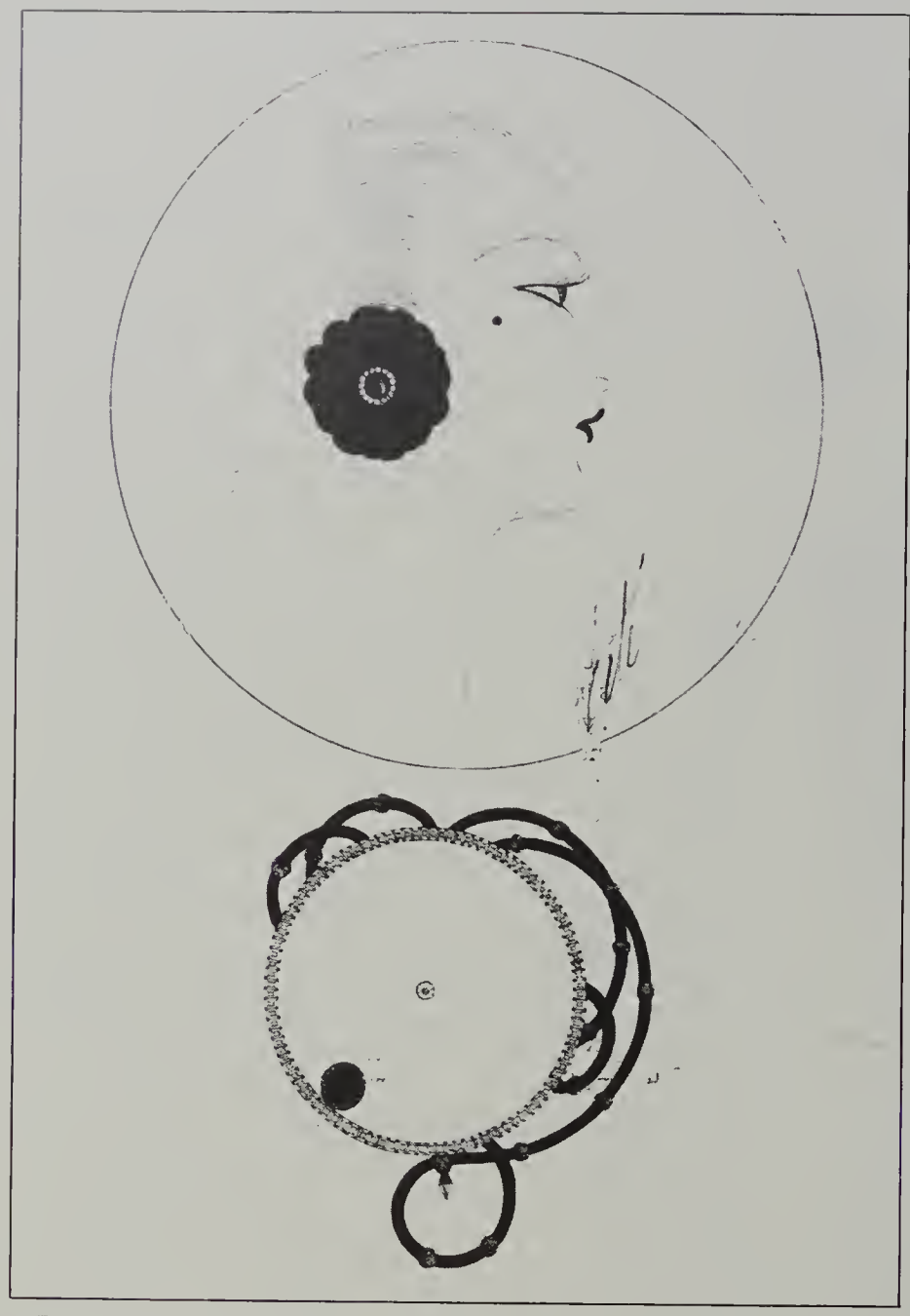
Pencil, indian ink and white gouache
28.5 × 22.7 cm
Signed in ink: Erté
Undated
Inscribed in blue pencil, erased:
Top right: '(2) LINE'
Right, from bottom to top: 'ENGRAVED/Erté' (with arrow pointing to signature)
(Remainder illegible)
Inscribed on verso:
Top centre, in pencil: 'velvet evening gown'
Right, from top to bottom, in blue pencil: 'Home Journal Erté–Feb 21'
'Home Journal Erté – Feb 21'
Centre, in ink: 'No 976/XII – 1924'
Centre, in pencil: '8598/H.30/Cat. 129'
Stamped on verso in ink: 'Erté/ Romain de Tirtoff/124, rue de Brancas/Sevres (S.-&-O.)'

Provenance
Miss A. Ryan
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 95

Literature
Although inscribed 'Home Journal . . . Feb 21' this design did not appear in *Ladies Home Journal*, Philadelphia at this date, nor any other date

Designing clothes was Erté's earliest passion. 'When other boys of my age were playing with their wooden soldiers, I was busy fabricating characters for imaginary ballets out of my mother's empty perfume bottles. . . . I would fill them with coloured water and make costumes out of bits of transparent lace and chiffon which I got from Maria, the dressmaker who lived in our house and made clothes for my mother and sister.'[1] In 1897, when he was only five, he designed an evening dress for his mother. She liked it so much that she had it made up by Maria. It was a great success. While designing evening dresses was considered to be a harmless and amusing occupation for a small child it was not considered to be serious. The Tirtoffs were a naval family. Erté's father was the Director of the Naval Engineering School in Kronstadt and many of his ancestors had been admirals: so it was assumed that when the time came he would also follow a naval career. But Erté only wanted to be a painter and to design clothes. The family reluctantly agreed to let him have his way and sent him to Paris in 1912. In order to

Note
1 Erté, *Things I Remember* (London/New York, 1975), p. 11



1 Ear-rings in diamonds and ostrich feathers, 1921.
Reproduced in Les Modes d'Erté

2 Straw and organza hat, 1923.
Reproduced in Les Modes d'Erté

supplement his income there, Erté made an arrangement with the Russian fashion magazine *Damski Mir* (*Ladies' World*) to contribute drawings of the latest Paris fashions. Quite soon Erté found work with a dressmaker called Caroline who sacked him after a month or two with the advice that he should find another career for himself as he would never be a designer of clothes. He went with his pile of drawings and, on an impulse, left them with Paul Poiret who was by then one of the most famous couturiers in Paris. Poiret was impressed and engaged Erté as one of his assistants. José de Zamora (see [51–56]) was another assistant who was already working for Poiret. Together they learnt the craft of making costume and also had their first experience, under Poiret's supervision, of designing costumes for the theatre. They were for *Le Minaret* by Jacques Richepin at the Théâtre de la Renaissance in 1913. This was also the year in which drawings with the signature Erté (the French and Russian pronunciation of the initial letters of his name Romain de Tirtoff) appeared for the first time. With the outbreak of the First World

War Poiret had to close his house. Erté decided to go into partnership with Adrienne Ridou who had been one of Poiret's best dressmakers: he would continue to design clothes, particularly for the American market, and she would make them up. Naively he used Poiret's name on the cards he had printed announcing his intentions. Poiret sued and won. The case caused an irrevocable quarrel between them. Poiret never mentioned Erté in his memoirs and Erté ignored Poiret in his article on modern dress in the 1929 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

In this article Erté begins by defining his idea of fashion: 'The evolution of modern feminine dress, corresponding closely to the emancipation of women at the beginning of the 20th century provides one of the most captivating pages in the history of modern civilisation. One often considers ridiculous the fashions of other days, but one has only to live the past over impartially to understand that all changes in fashion are rungs in a ladder leading to an inconstant ideal.'[2] He then describes how the theatre, particularly the effect of the Russian Ballet, had influenced fashion immediately before the First World War but that 'From 1914–20 there was nothing worthy of entry in the history of fashion; the theatres giving no new styles, old styles were recalled. . . . Still novelty was sought and in 1921 the new line – the low waist was found. At the same time the skirt was lengthened slightly. The hair, drawn away from the forehead, formed a high chignon often held by a Spanish comb. The Spanish influence made itself felt, not only in combs and headdress, and for a time women draped themselves in Spanish shawls, very often using them in place of evening cloaks.'[3]

Erté does himself an injustice. In 1914 he thought to contribute designs to an American magazine and the toss of a coin decided he should send his drawings to *Harper's Bazar* and not to *Vogue*. His first cover design for *Harper's Bazar* appeared in January 1915. When later that year he also contributed some drawings to the rival magazine *Vogue*, William Randolph Hearst, the publisher of *Harper's Bazar*, offered him an exclusive ten-year contract. This was followed by a second ten-year contract and then a third which was only terminated by Erté in 1937 after a new editor, Carmel Snow, began to interfere by making suggestions which were unacceptable to him. During his long association with the magazine Erté contributed to 264 issues, designed 240 covers and made over 2500 drawings. He was also introduced by Henry Blackman Sell[4] to other Hearst publications including *International Cosmopolitan* and *Ladies Home Journal*.

This design is a perfect example not only of Erté's unique draughtsmanship but also of his unerring sense of total fashion. It is not just a design for an evening gown, but a design for a whole ensemble: the coiffure, the drop ear-ring, the ring on the finger, the shoes, even the make-up with the accentuated eye, all form an essential part of the 'look' that Erté has created. Although his designs share certain similarities in the look – the position of the waist or the length of the skirt – every fashion drawing that Erté made is individual. As he wrote: 'Just consider how most boring it would be if, during a whole season, you met women all of the same type who said the same things, had the same ideas! I experience the same feeling when I see women dressed alike.'[5]

Erté's invention, in terms of his ideas, is boundless but it is always controlled by his craftsman's sense of practicality. 'Another thing which displeases me is to see fashion creations with details that are absolutely of no use. . . . In my opinion, every detail, every accessory, should harmonize perfectly with the principal theme of the toilette, and every fashion should have a purpose. A button that does not button is anathema to me.'[6] For over twenty years Erté's imagination, realised in thousands of uniquely elegant and deliciously attractive drawings, inspired women to dress in an individual but practical fashion.

Unlike his costume designs for the theatre Erté always sent the original drawing to the magazine to which he contributed with the stipulation in his contract that it should be returned to him after the printer had finished with it. Hence the inscriptions in blue pencil on both the recto and verso.

Notes
2 R. de T.-E., article on 'Dress, modern' in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1929 edition (reprinted 1946)), p. 656
3 *Ibid.*
4 Editor of *Harper's Bazar*, 1920–26
5 Erté in *Harper's Bazar* (March 1919), quoted in Blum, Stella, *Designs by Erté* (New York, 1976), p. VIII
6 *Ibid.* (May 1919), quoted p. IX

Erté

39 Design for the costume of a Merveilleuse in 'Charades'

Pencil, gouache and gold paint
32.3 × 24.9 cm
Signed in ink: Erté
Undated
Inscribed on verso in ink: '"Charades"/No 12.923/Merveilleuse'
Stamped on verso in ink: 'ERTE/Romain de Tirtoff/Composition originale'

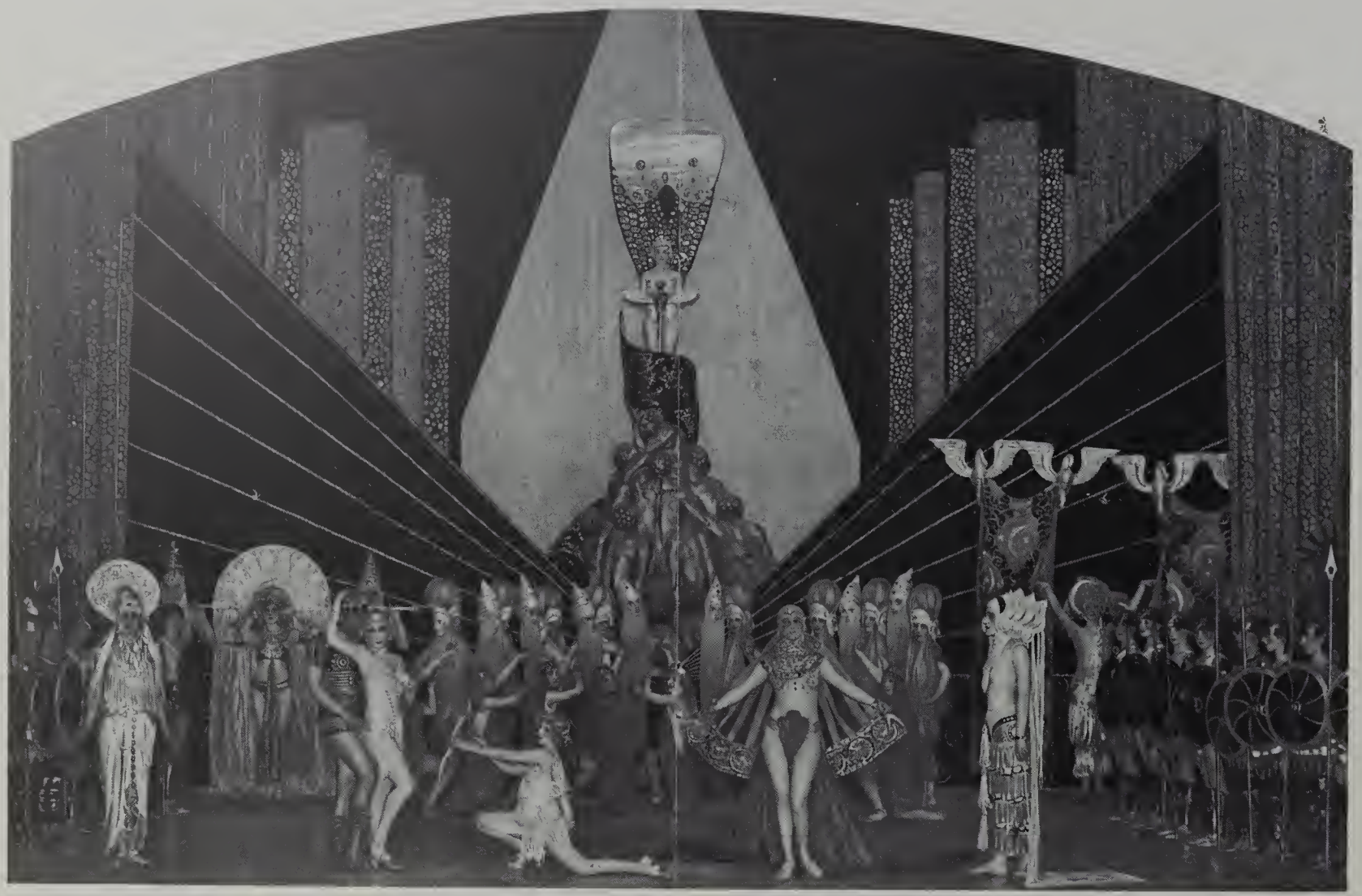
This design was made in September 1953 for the show *Charades* at La Nouvelle Eve in Paris. *Charades* was not a full length revue in a theatre but a cabaret, or floor show, in a night club and therefore no special programme was printed. The Merveilleuses were played by the famous 'Girls de la Nouvelle Eve'.

Erté made almost all his fashion drawings for magazines in black and white and his imagination was necessarily constrained by the practicality of everyday dress. But in the theatre he could use the whole palette of colours and develop his imagination into the most exotic flights of fancy. 'Quelle étonnante richesse de coloris! Les couleurs se renouvellent sous son pinceau. Du spectre solaire aux sept notes il tire des combinaisons à l'infini sans jamais altérer aucune couleur fondamentale. . . . Son trait arachnéen témoigne d'un même don d'invention que ses coloris. Le moindre de ses dessins est riche de mille détails dont chacun a un sens, une signification.'[1]

It was revue that gave Erté the fullest opportunity for expressing his extraordinary inventiveness. Between 1916 and the early '70s he designed hundreds of sets and thousands of costumes for revues in Paris, New York, London and Blackpool.[2] His longest association was with the Folies-Bergère in Paris and from 1919 to 1936 he designed sets and costumes for thirteen revues.[3] No other designer has created such a seemingly infinite variety of erotic costumes (figs 1, 2). And yet with Erté there are two constant factors: the costume is always practical in the sense that it can be made according to his design and, when made, worn and that every detail has a function and is necessary to the design. Erté was always meticulous about the making of his costumes. 'A very important part of my work for the theatre is devoted to supervising the execution of my sets and costumes. In fact I spend more time on this than on the designs themselves. . . . For costumes, I have to select the fabrics, indicate the way in which they are to be cut, explain how the embroideries should be executed, and then assist at the fitting, supervising every detail. Although my sketches are very clear, I still have to give a great deal of explanation.'[4] Fortunately Erté was able to work very often with Max Weldy. He was a great costumier who understood the designer's intentions and was able to realise them with minimal compromise. On one occasion, however, Erté sent some designs abroad and the costumes had to be made without his supervision. The lines which Erté had drawn to indicate the folds in the skirt were constructed in wire and then embroidered on the chiffon. The design had been reproduced exactly but it was impossible to move in it.

The enormous work of making the costumes for a revue is usually a race against time involving a great many technicians. Once the designs have been drawn, flat scale models are made in cardboard and arranged on a model of the set so that the combination of all the colours

Notes
1 de Coquet, James, 'Un Soir, chez Erté', *Comoedia* (Paris, n.d.), cutting (Cecil Madden Collection, Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)
2 See Chronology
3 From 1921 revues at the Folies-Bergère have always had thirteen letters in the title including the word 'Folie'
4 Erté, *Things I Remember* (London/New York, 1975) p. 161

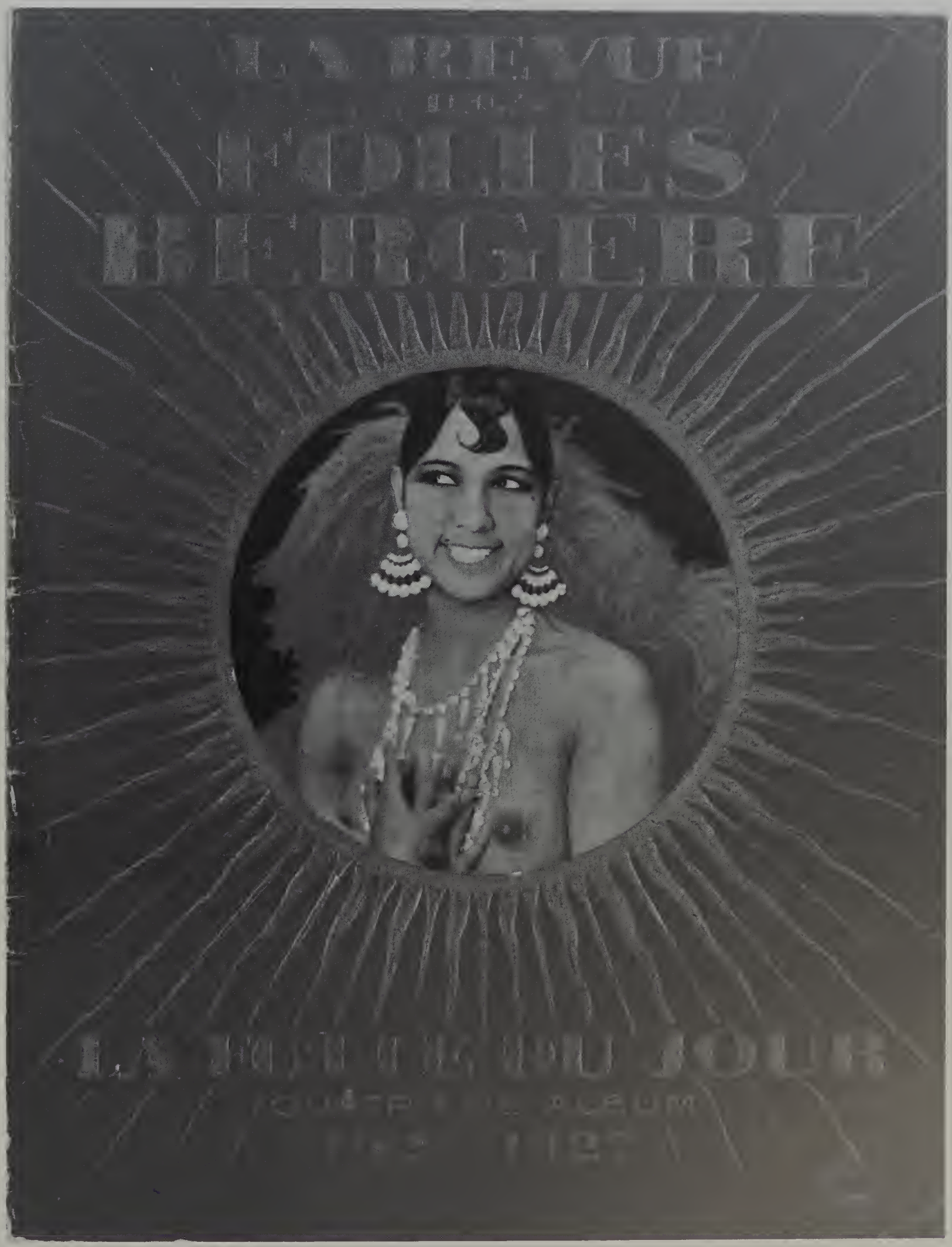


1 Les Princesses de Légende, one of the numbers in the revue La Grande Folie at the Folies-Bergère, Paris, 1928. Set and costumes by Erté. Reproduced in the souvenir programme (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

and shapes can be adjusted if necessary. When the final designs have been agreed each costume is first made to half scale by the head of the wardrobe department. This model is then given to assistants who make up the number of costumes required of each design to the right scale and according to the measurements of the individual performer. Each costume has to be made twice because in nightly revue everyone has to have a 'wash' and a 'wear'. Therefore a revue which may need 600 different costumes actually has to have 1200. The number of designs required is usually smaller because costumes of the same design will be worn by a number of the performers, particularly in big chorus numbers. It is not unusual, however, for a designer to have to make between 200 and 300 designs for a show.

Erté's drawings always appear to have been done in perfect repose; the frenzy of having to meet a deadline is never apparent. The drawing and painting is done with the utmost care, no detail is absent. His fantasies are always realisable but because his designs are flat and the mask is often faceless they become our fantasies as well. With Erté, both nothing and everything is left to the imagination.

2 Joséphine Baker on the cover of the souvenir programme of the Folies-Bergère, 1926–27 (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)



2

Alexandra Exter

40 Design for the costume of a character with a fan

Pencil and watercolour
49 × 33.2 cm
Unsigned
Undated
Stamped on verso: 'This sketch is by/Alexandra Exter/and was part of her estate/Simon Lissim/Dobbs Ferry New York/February 1952' (the word 'sketch' is in Simon Lissim's handwritting. He also signed on the stamp above his name) and 'Collection/of/Dorothea W. Lissim'

Provenance
Estate of the artist
Dorothea W. Lissim Collection, Dobbs Ferry, New York
Marc Rosenthal Collection, Paris
Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York, 12 December 1976

Exhibitions
Paris, Galerie Paul Guillaume, *Les Peintres du Théâtres Kamerny de Moscou*, 1923
Venice, Biennale, *Russian Avant-garde Painters of the theatre and cinema*, 1924
New York, Vincent Astor Gallery, Lincoln Center, *Artist of the Theatre-Alexandra Exter*, Spring–Summer 1974, no. 3

Literature
B Ashkinazi, Z., 'Kamerny Teatr', *Apollon*, no. 10 (St Petersburg, December 1914), pp. 74–77
Tougenhold, J., 'Pismo iz Moskvi (Letter from Moscow)', *Apollon* (Petrograd, January 1917), pp. 71–74
T-d, J. (Tougendhold, J.), 'Moskovskie teatri (The Moscow Theatres)'. *Apollon* (Petrograd, October–December 1917), pp. 115–22
Levinson, André, 'Le "Théâtre de Chambre" de Moscou et le décor spatial', *L'Amour de L'Art* IV (Paris, 1923), pp. 445–50
Remon G., 'Décor Spatial', *Lanterne* (Paris, 21 March 1923)
Anon, 'Les représentations du Théâtre Kamerny de Moscou', *Le Théâtre et Comoedia Illustré* (Paris, April 1923)
Romoff, Serge, 'L'Art Russe après la Révolution', *L'Art Vivant*, no. 1 (Paris, 1 January 1925), pp. 8–10
Guinsbourg, M.L., Lazarievsky, Iv., and Tougendhold, J., 'L'Architecture, l'Art industriel, l'Art du Livre et l'Art de la mise en scène dans l'U.R.S.S.', *L'Amour de L'Art* VI (Paris, 1925), pp. 389–408

Collections
Leningrad, Theatre Museum
London, Victoria and Albert Museum
Moscow, Bakhrushin Theatre Museum
New York, New York Public Library, Lincoln Center
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum

This drawing has been exhibited as being a design for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* which Exter made for Alexander Tairov's Kamerny Theatre in 1921. It is, however, unlike any of the designs which she is known to have made for that production, some of which are in the collections of the Bakhrushin Theatre Museum in Moscow, and, besides, none of the characters carried fans. This is an unfinished drawing in a style very similar to the one illustrated in black and white dated 1921 and called 'The Dancer' (fig. 1).[1] It is more likely to be a preparatory drawing for one of the costume designs for *Entremesés*, a series of comical interludes by Cervantes which was planned, also in 1921, for the 1st Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre. Exter always made many preliminary drawings for her designs and we can see in them the struggle she had with pencil and brush to try to get the composition right. Here she was still undecided about the position of the head, but the drawing has all the vigour and strength of her finished work.

Note
1 Exhibited at the Galerie Gmurzynska in Cologne, *Die Kunstismen in Russland 1907–30*, 11 May–end June 1977, no. 24, dated 1921

1 *The Dancer by Exter, dated 1921*

Alexandra Exter was a painter and an entirely original designer for the theatre. Before the First World War she had frequently travelled to Paris where she joined the circle of Picasso, Marinetti, Apollinaire and other artists. She was influenced by their experiments in art, reported on them in Russia and developed her own ideas from them. In 1916 she designed her first important work for the theatre, *Famira Kifared*, which was directed by Alexander Tairov and with whom she shared her revolutionary ideas. 'The most significant theatrical manifestation at the beginning of the season in Moscow is without doubt the production by the Kamerny Theatre of *Famira Kifared*,' wrote J. Tougendhold. 'The Kamerny Theatre, under its director A.J. Tairov, thought to stage *Famira Kifared* in the cubist spirit with the help of the first use in Russia of A.A. Zaltsman's system of diffused lighting. With this aim in view A.A. Exter was invited to be the designer and in fact Tairov's choice was entirely consistent because she is one of the most cultured and talented artists representing 'cubism' in Russia.'[2] Tairov founded the experimental Kamerny Theatre in Moscow in 1914. The first production was *Sakuntala* a play by Kalidasi based on an Indian dramatic poem. '. . . It shows,' wrote a critic 'that this new company is trying to break with the scenic traditions of the Moscow Art Theatre and is groping towards new possibilities of presenting theatre.'[3] Both Tairov and Exter had very definite ideas about theatre design and although they were in touch at the beginning it was not until she designed *Famira Kifared* for him that their ideas gelled and found their true expression on stage. In his *Director's Notebooks* Tairov wrote: 'In spite of the fact that for the last 20 years theatre costume has at first sight appeared to have been very successful, and in spite of the fact that the designs by Bakst, Soudeikine, Sapounov, Anisfeld and others have caressed the eyes, I must say that the problem of costume in the theatre is infinitely far from being resolved. The right theatre costume is not an ornament to decorate the actor, not a copy of the style of dress of any particular period, not a fashion plate in some old magazine. The actor is not a doll or a puppet to be dressed up in the latest clothes. No, costume is the second skin of the actor. It cannot be

Notes

2 Tougendhold, J., 'Pismo iz Moskvi (Letter from Moscow)', *Apollon* (Petrograd, January 1917), p. 72. Exter's designs for *Famira Kifared* were exhibited at the Bubnovi Valet (The Jack of Diamonds) Exhibition in Moscow in 1916

3 Ashkinazi, Z., *Apollon*, no. 10 (St Petersburg, 1915), pp. 74–77

2 Set design for Romeo and Juliet. Reproduced in Abram Ephros, Kamerny Teatr i ego Khudozhniki 1914–1934 (National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

3 Alice Koonen as Juliet, Nicolas Czeretelli as Romeo and Svarozhich as Fra Lorenzo in Romeo and Juliet, Kamerny Theatre, 1921

divorced from his body. It is the visible individuality of his stage presence and it must merge with him completely just as in a song the music cannot be separated from the words nor can a single note be changed without destroying the whole image.'[4] After *Famira Kifared*, which Tairov himself considered to be the first time at which some kind of solution to the problem of theatre costume had been reached, Exter continued her experiments with him in a production of Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* in 1917 and, most notably, in the production of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1921 (figs 2–7).

Exter's costumes were not designed in the conventional sense and then sewn out of soft cloth which draped the actor and fell into different natural folds round his body as he moved. Her costumes were constructed out of wire and solid materials so that they formed a kind of carapace round the actor, his 'second skin', and the exact colour of every part including the shadows in the folds was predetermined and painted by the artist. The actor is a living sculpture and the costume is a mask covering the body. Every part of the costume, from head to foot, head dress to shoe, as well as the make-up was conceived as a whole. Although the costume was always obviously based on the human form Exter would exaggerate certain parts and shapes (the shoulder, the hips or the thighs) if she thought that would enhance the characterisation. Therefore, before designing a costume she would note the actor's movements, not just his moves from one part of the stage to another, but the way he moved and the general rhythm and tempo

Note
4 Tairov, Alexander, *Zapiski Rezhissera* (Moscow, 1921), pp. 161–62

4 Costume design for Famira Kifared, 1916. Reproduced in Abram Ephros, Kamerny Teatr i ego Khudozhniki 1914–1934 (National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

5 Costume design for Herod in Oscar Wilde's Salomé, 1917. Reproduced in Abram Ephros, Kamerny Teatr i ego Khudozhniki 1914–1934 (National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

6 Male costume design for Romeo and Juliet, 1921. Reproduced in Abram Ephros, Kamerny Teatr i ego Khudozhniki 1914–1934 (National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

of the whole play. 'Exter's costumes are therefore human rhythms petrified in lines and colours.'[5] Exter was always as much concerned with designing the set as with the costumes, the two went together and could not be separated. Her innovation in set design was the banishment of realistic illusion. Although a painter herself she deplored the two-dimensional painted backcloth depicting some static scene. As the actor moving on stage was three dimensional the set too should be built in three dimensions, in different planes, but reduced to the simplest form necessary for the action of the play. Exter, with Tairov, were the first to experiment with this new kind of set. '. . . C'est le *décor spatial*. L'espace est organisé et n'est plus un simple fond plan; les rapports spatiaux sont calculés. Le plateau se transforme, se construit, des plate-formes de niveaux différents et formes variées sont pratiquées. Ainsi, nous dit-on, l'action peut être représentée *en profondeur*, les groupes sont étagés, les épisodes distribués . . .'[6]

Exter left Russia in 1924 never to return. In 1926, she began making a series of marionettes on the theme of Commedia dell'Arte characters which inspired her to produce some of her most impressive work. She continued to work for the theatre from time to time but without Tairov she could not really develop her revolutionary and original ideas further. She died in poverty and obscurity near Paris in 1949. Recently but unfortunately too late her importance and greatness has been rediscovered, too late because so much of her work is unidentified and no longer identifiable.

Notes
5 Tugendhold, J., *Alexandra Exter* (Berlin, 1922), p. 24
6 Remon, G., 'Décor Spatial', *Lanterne* (Paris, 21 March 1923)

7 Alice Koonen as Salomé and Peter Ludin as Iokanaan(?) in Salomé, Kamerny Theatre, 1917

Alexandra Exter

41 Design for the costume of a dancer with a red and a grey veil

Pencil, watercolour and aluminium foil *appliqué*
36.2 × 27 cm
Signed in ink in Russian: A A Exter
Undated

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 21 June 1976, lot 20

This design for an unidentified dancer was probably done before 1920 and perhaps earlier, but whether it was for a particular production or not is impossible to say. This costume is not in Exter's pure 'constructivist' style; she is using flowing silks or chiffon for the dancer's veils, but the skirt is already very characteristic. Exter, undecided about the head, did not finish it and then, curiously, changed her mind about it because the dancer, originally drawn with a face, is now shown with the back of her head. This makes the drawing wrong but it does not matter: the elongated white arms dividing the enormous bow and the exaggerated black legs and shoes are perfectly poised in relation to the soft red and grey set against the sharp silver *appliqué*. The figure is alive and swirling.

Alexandra Exter

42 Design for the costume of a courtier in black

Pencil and watercolour
36.2 × 27 cm
Unsigned
Undated

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 21 June 1973, lot 20

Alexandra Exter

43 Design for the costume of a courtier in white

Pencil, watercolour and aluminium foil *appliqué*
36.2 × 26.8 cm
Unsigned
Undated

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 21 June 1973, lot 19

Both these designs were drawn in the early 1920s and the fact that they are clearly finished drawings and in the same style may be an indication that they were costume designs for a specific production. But as with all of Exter's work which is not identified in any way it is no longer really possible to say for which production they were intended or, indeed, if they were made for a production at all. Sadly, much of Exter's work was never realised in the theatre, but, undaunted, she continued to design many imaginary projects.

These works, by the traces of pencil still showing, demonstrate the care which Exter gave to the drawing of the figure in order to make it stand firmly. They are also brilliant and lively examples of her 'constructivist' costume design. The costumes would have been as solid on stage as they look on paper. The bulging skirts, the collars, the puffed sleeves on the black figure and the cuffs on the white one would have been made precisely as drawn, of a material probably stiffened with wire. Black and white were Exter's favourite dominant colours because she believed they gave the most powerful effect in the theatre, but she often heightened her costumes with touches of pure colour, blue as here, red, green or yellow.

The revolution in theatre design in which Alexandra Exter played such an important and vital part was not unveiled in the West until the Kamerny Theatre visited Paris in 1923. The critics did not doubt the sincerity of the company's aims, accepted they were seeing something new, but on the whole were unimpressed and certainly did not realise its significance: 'Le Théâtre Kamerny est la manifestation la plus révolutionnaire que nous avons vue depuis longtemps dans l'art dramatique. C'est ce qui explique les discussions qu'il a soulevées. Parce qu'il bouleverse toutes nos habitudes, ce n'est pas une raison pour contester sa valeur. Cette valeur est certaine. Il est peu probable, néanmoins, qu'il ait une influence directe sur notre propre théâtre. Sa mentalité est trop éloignée de la nôtre et son principe même trop contestable.'[1] It was indeed several years before Exter's principles of three-dimensional theatre design were accepted and then followed by other European companies.

Note
1 *Théâtre et Comoedia Illustre*, 'Les représentations du Théâtre Kamerny de Moscou' (Paris, April 1923)

Alexandra Exter

44 Design for the costume of an actress as Mosil in an unidentified play

Pencil, watercolour, indian ink and gold paint
36.2 × 26.8 cm
Signed in ink in Russian: A A Exter
Inscribed in pencil in Russian (not in the artist's handwriting): 'Mosil'

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 21 June 1973, lot 19

This is probably the earliest example of Exter's work in the Thyssen collection and dates from about 1916 or even earlier. It is in a more naturalistic style than the previous designs but it already shows her constructivist approach to theatre costume particularly in the high collar, the head dress and the cuffs. Exter's use of black as a dominant stage colour is already evident and in this design she has had second thoughts and increased the original amount. The red of the skirt was first painted to be much lower. The larger area of black gives greater weight to the figure but also tends to immobilise it.

Although the design is inscribed (not by the artist) with a certain character's name it has not been possible to identify the play in which she appears. Therefore it is also not known whether or not this play was produced, but as the design is inscribed it is almost certainly not just a project.

[45] 1 *Double page spread of costume designs for Contes de Fées. Reproduced in Ballets Russes, souvenir programme. May–June 1922 season, Paris (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

Le Mariage de la Belle au Bois Dormant

Ballet by Marius Petipa

Composer: Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Choreographer: Marius Petipa, reproduced by Serge Grigorieff, with choreography for the dances of the *Comtesses, Marquises, Duchesses*, and *Barbe-Bleue, Papillon Siamois, Schéhérazade, Les Trois Ivan* in the *Contes de Fées*, and *Prince Charming's Variation* by Bronislava Nijinska
Set and costumes: Alexandre Benois with costumes for the *Contes de Fées* by Nathalie Gontcharova
Conductor: Gregor Fitelberg
Company: Les Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev

Dancers in *Schéhérazade* in the *Contes des Fées:* Maria Dalbaicin, Mikhail Semenov, Michel Pavlov

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre national de l'Opéra, Paris, 18 May 1922

Synopsis
The last scene of *The Sleeping Princess* (see p.77).
At the first performance it had the following sections:

1 Prelude
2 Polonaise
3 Pas des Sept Demoiselles d'honneur et de leurs Cavaliers
4 Scène et Danse des Duchesses
5 Danse des Comtesses
6 Danse des Marquises
7 Farandole
8 Contes de Fées:
    1 Floreștan et ses soeurs
    2 Le Chat Botté
    3 L'Oiseau Bleu
    4 Le Chaperon Rouge
    5 Barbe-Bleue
    6 Le Papillon Siamois
    7 Schéhérazade
    8 Les Princesses de Porçelaine
    9 Les Trois Ivan
9 Le Princesse Aurore et le Prince Charmant
10 Mazurka

Subsequently some of the *Contes de Fées* were cut but *Les Trois Ivan* always remained a great favourite.
The ballet was known in English by the title *Aurora's Wedding*

Nathalie Gontcharova

45 Design for Maria Dalbaicin's costume as Schéhérazade in the 'Contes de Fées'

Pencil, watercolour, gouache, gold and silver paint
44.2 × 32.4 cm
Unsigned
Undated

Provenance
Roberto Shorto, London, 14 November 1980

Literature
A *Ballets Russes*, souvenir programme, May–June 1922 season, Paris, ill.
B Nède, André, *Le Figaro* (Paris, 7 May 1922)
Laloy, Louis, *Comoedia* (Paris, 19 May 1922)

The Sleeping Princess had been a great triumph with the balletomanes in London but the general public had not been ready for this long evening of classical ballet. The production had not filled the Alhambra Theatre night after night for six months as had been expected and hoped for and it was taken off after only 105 performances. It proved to be a financial disaster for Diaghilev. He found himself so much in debt that the impressario Sir Oswald Stoll sequestered all the scenery and costumes which had been designed by Bakst.

But Diaghilev had a contract with the Paris Opéra to present a new season of three new ballets as well as his standard repertoire in May–June 1922. The new ballets were to be Stravinsky's *Les Noces* and *Mavra*, and the full-length *The Sleeping Beauty* as done in London. *Les Noces* was not ready (see [46]) and *Mavra* had a change of designer. Diaghilev had promised *Mavra* to Bakst but, in a fit of pique, took the commission away from him and gave it to Léopold Survage instead.[1] This was the cause of the final and irreparable quarrel between Bakst and Diaghilev. *Les Noces* was replaced by Stravinsky's *Renard* which was designed by Larionov and produced for the first time on the same evening as *Le Mariage*, 18 May 1922. And Diaghilev could not possibly present *The Sleeping Beauty* as he no longer had either the scenery or the costumes for it. He therefore proposed to present only the last scene and to call the ballet *Le Mariage de la Belle au Bois Dormant*. The director of the Paris Opéra, Jacques Rouché, had no alternative but to accept these changes in order to save the season. Diaghilev overcame the problem of scenery and costumes for this shortened version of *The Sleeping Princess* by deciding to use the set and costumes for the principals from *Le Pavillon d'Armide* which had been designed by Alexandre Benois in 1909 and which was still in the repertoire. But for the *Contes de Fées* sequence of dances he commissioned new costumes from Nathalie Gontcharova.[2]

In the event, neither Diaghilev nor Rouché need have worried about cutting *The Sleeping Princess* because most of the critics in Paris assumed they saw exactly what had been seen in London. Whether this was clever public relations or the ignorance of the critics remains in question. But the critics liked what they saw: 'Mais si ce ballet appartient par son ordonnance régulière au genre classique, le goût moderne de la mise en scène a certes ajouté beaucoup de pittoresque à ces raccourcis légendaires, et sans avoir vu les costumes de la création, il y a de cela un demi siècle, je doute fort qu'ils aient pu rivaliser, pour l'harmonie vibrante des couleurs, avec ceux de Mme Gontcharova.'[3] This critic, indeed, seems to have been unaware of the

Notes
1 *Les Noces* was produced in 1923 (see [46]). *Mavra* was produced on 3 June 1922 at the Théâtre national de l'Opéra, Paris with designs by Léopold Survage (1879–1968) best known as an abstract painter
2 Diaghilev had first commissioned Erté, see p.172
3 Laloy, Louis, *Comoedia*, (Paris, 19 May 1922), cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)

London production designed by Bakst because he refers to the original production of *The Sleeping Beauty* in Russia in 1890.

Gontcharova's costumes are quite different from both those of the first production and the ones designed by Bakst (figs 1 and 2). She did not try to imitate or adapt his style in any way. This design, made in 1922, is her own fantastical notion of the Orient done in her naturalistic style. The vivid and harsh reds and greens that she used earlier, as in her designs for *Le Coq d'Or* (1914), have been muted. The effect is more mysterious. The billowing silk, the green and red with flashes of gold, and the long white lace frills moving with the dancer in this frenzied interlude would have made a very thrilling effect on stage.

Gontcharova came to Diaghilev's rescue and created costumes for one of the most popular productions of the Ballets Russes. It remained in the repertoire after Diaghilev's death and was regularly performed throughout the world when the company continued under Colonel de Basil as Le Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

2 Singaievsky, Dalbaicin and Pavlov in Schéhérazade from Contes de Fées in costumes designed by Bakst (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Les Noces

Russian choreographic scenes by Igor Stravinsky

Choreographer: Bronislava Nijinska
Set and costumes: Nathalie Gontcharova
Conductor: Ernest Ansermet
Company: Les Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev

PRINCIPAL DANCERS
The Bride: Felia Dubrovska
The Bridegroom: Leon Woizikovsky

SOLO SINGERS
Helen Smirnova, Maria Davidova, Michel d'Arial, George Lanskoy

PIANISTS
Hélène Léon, Marcelle Mayer, Georges Auric, Edouard Flament

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Théâtre de la Gaîté-Lyrique, Paris, 13 June 1923

Synopsis
A cantata with dances showing an old Russian peasant wedding. Originally divided into four scenes: Blessing the Bride, Blessing the Bridegroom, the Bride's Departure and the Wedding, the Wedding Feast.

Nathalie Gontcharova

46 Design for the costume of the Bride

Pencil and watercolour (bottom left-hand corner of the original sheet of paper has been torn off at some time and has been replaced with a new sheet)
40.3 × 2.7 cm
Unsigned
Undated

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 30 May 1974, lot 60

Literature
B Levinson, André, *Comoedia* (Paris, 16 June 1923), p. 2
Wells, H.G., 'public letter' (18 June 1926)
Goncharova, Nathalia, 'The Metamorphoses of the ballet "Les Noces"', *Leonardo* 12 (London, 1979), pp. 137–43
d'E., A.G., 'Mme Gontcharova nous parle du décor et des costumes de "Noces", Les Ballets Russes', *Le Parisien* (Paris, 14 June 1923)
Schneider, Louis, *Le Gaulois* (Paris, 17 June 1923)
Malherbe, Henry, unidentified cutting (Paris, 20 June 1923)

Collections
COSTUME DESIGNS
Hartford, Connecticut, Wadsworth Atheneum
London, Victoria and Albert Museum

Stravinsky first began to compose *Les Noces* in 1913 after *Le Sacre du Printemps*. He worked at it off and on over the years but the final score was not completed until one month before the first performance.

Gontcharova first began to work on the designs for *Les Noces* at the beginning of 1916. She wrote: 'In my first interpretation of this theme, I took it at its face-value; a feast, a happy event in the country. During this half of the winter (1916), I produced many full, highly coloured, much ornamented, typical peasant costumes, with some innovations of design and combinations of colour. I also did several designs in the same style for the sets and avant-scene curtain. . . . My childhood had been spent in the Russian countryside and I had often seen peasant weddings. That everybody drank, sang, ate and shouted a lot, had a thoroughly good time, I know. But was it really joy?'[1] She then changed her ideas completely. She eliminated all her bright colours. Against a backcloth which melted from pale blue, to grey, to light ochre she decided to have costumes of a uniform colour, brown symbolising the earth and white symbolising purity (figs 1, 2).

The effect was sensational. What had happened to the Russian Ballet who had brought all that colour and sparkle and luxuriant decoration to the stage? It was too revolutionary. Although some critics understood what the artists had been trying to do they did not think they had succeeded: 'M. Stravinsky, Mmes Nijinska et Gontcharova ont voulu, je suppose, nous faire entendre tout ce que la cérémonie du mariage, en Russie, a de tragique, de farouche, de tyrannique et de comique amer. . . . Pour l'instant, avouerai-je que ces Noces m'ont donné tout l'air lugubre d'un enterrement.'[2] The obvious good taste and refinement of the final set and costumes was thought to make the wedding too much like a 'cérémonie lunaire'[3] and therefore too unreal. But H.G. Wells came to the defence of the ballet and published a long 'public letter' in which he wrote: '. . . The silly pretty-pretty tradition of Watteau and Fragonard is flung aside. Instead of fancy dress peasants we have peasants in plain black and white, and the smirking flirtatiousness

Notes
1 Unidentified cutting in William Beaumont Morris Scrapbooks (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)
2 Malherbe, Henry, unidentified cutting (Paris, 20 June 1923), (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)
3 Schneider, Louis, *Le Gaulois* (Paris, 17 June 1923), cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)

I

1 Svetlana Beriosova as the Bride in the final version of the costume in Les Noces, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden 1956. Photograph by Houston Rogers (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

2 A 'choreographic' drawing of female dancers in the final version of the design for the ballet (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

2

of Daphnis and Chloe gives place to a richly humourous solemnity. It was an amazing experience to come out of this delightful display with the warp and woof of music and vision still running and interweaving in one's mind, and find a little group of critics flushed with resentment and ransacking the stores of their minds for cheap trite depreciation of the freshest, and strongest thing that they had chance to praise for a long time.'[4]

This design is one of the early versions which Gontcharova made for the costume of the Bride in about 1916 before she tried to 'atteindre l'extrême limite de la simplicité'. Gontcharova can never be likened to either Watteau or Fragonard but this is a colourful, delicate and only slightly prettified adaptation of Russian peasant dress. Peasants never shied away from colour. This is a happy drawing, an instinctive response to the idea of a wedding. It was made before Gontcharova asked herself if weddings were really joyful.

Note

4 From 'Reprint of a letter of H.G. Wells Esq.' (Enthoven Collection, Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Nathalie Gontcharova

47 Design for the costume of a Jewish priest

Pencil
51.3 × 35.3 cm
Signed with stamp: 'Atelier M Larionov' and 'M.L.'
Inscribed in pencil in Russian:
Top right 'zoloto chervonnoe/oranzhevoe/i sinii/kontour' (dark gold, orange and blue outline)
Centre to bottom right 'Vse linii/vnutri zolotogo/ornamenta/beliya/i koe gde beliya/i po konturu/zolotie/krupnii/ornamenti/zoloto metalicheskoe/strav [illegible]/mitra i podol vnizu/oranzhevo zolotoi/i kvodratnikh svitok/oranzh i ornamenti vnizu/ chernii' (all the lines inside the gold decoration to be white and here and there white and on the outline gold the large decorations to be metallic gold . . . the mitre and the hem at the bottom to be orange gold and the square scroll orange and the black decorations below black)
Below hand 'ora sine kontour' (orange blue outline)
Left of face 'cherno' (black)
Right of face 'cher' (black, abbreviated)/'oranzhevii' (orange)
On shoulder 'zelenii shtrikh' (green dash)/'sie' (blue, abbreviated)
Down right of body 'ora' (orange, abbreviated)/'cher' (black, abbreviated)/'zel' (green, abbreviated)/'or' (orange, abbreviated)/'z' (green, abbreviated)/'zeleno' (green, abbreviated)/'sht' (dash, abbreviated)/'or' (orange, abbreviated)
On shoes from left to right 'zol, zelen, zol, zel, zol' (gold, green, gold, green gold, abbreviated)

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 15 December 1969, lot 108
Sotheby's, London, 29 October 1981, lot 102
Galerie du Lac, Vevey, Switzerland, 14 February 1983

Literature
B Rubens, Alfred, *A History of Jewish costume* (London, 1973)

Although this drawing is stamped with the Larionov atelier stamp it is by Gontcharova. It was probably stamped after Larionov's death. There were times when their styles of work resembled each other, but here the patterns on the cassock and the drawing and the position of the feet expose this as being by Gontcharova. However, there is another slight confusion. Having compared the handwriting of both artists with other examples[1] I am convinced that all the inscriptions were written by Larionov. Russian is written more uniformly than English although everyone develops his own way of writing certain letters. In the inscriptions on this drawing the Russian letters 'z', 'r' and 'd' are the particular clues to the writing being by Larionov and not by Gontcharova.

Note
1 Annotated sketchbooks and notebooks in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The design is for an unidentified production. Stylistically it was made between 1918 and 1922. There is, however, no Jewish priest in any of the productions that Gontcharova was working on then. A Russian priest was going to be in *Les Noces* but he did not appear in the final version. If this is meant to be a Jewish priest then Gontcharova did not really research her subject. The Jewish prayer shawl (the *tallith*) is a shawl and not a cape with cuffs. The stripes (in black or blue) are not all over but only at the ends. From the four corners of a *tallith* hang the *tsitsith* consisting of four threads (in blue or white) looped to form eight. The object with the star of David which the priest is holding can be interpreted as being the holy scroll but here it looks like a book. If the star of David were replaced by jewels or a cross and the black and white cape were removed it would be a drawing of a Russian Orthodox bishop, holding the book of the Gospels, giving the blessing. It is an image which is often repeated in icons. The drawing follows the established iconography for many saints but Saint Nicholas in particular (fig. 1). As Gontcharova was Russian Orthodox she would have been totally familiar with the way Russian saints were depicted.

This drawing has both the awe and the calm of a Russian icon.

1 Icon of St Nicholas, sixteenth century (Zagorst State Art Museum)

Kikimora

Ballet in one act based on a Russian fairy story

Composer: Anatole Liadov
Choreographer: Léonide Massine
Set, costumes and make-up: Michel Larionov
Conductor: Ernest Ansermet
Company: Les Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev

PRINCIPAL DANCERS
Kikimora: Maria Shabelska
The Cat: Stanislas Idzikovsky

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Teatro Eugenia-Victoria, San Sebastian, 25 August 1916

Synopsis
Kikimora, the embodiment of wickedness, is guarded in her cradle by her faithful servant, the Cat, the symbol of human malice. When Kikimora begins to feel strong she jumps about her house and forces her protector to fight. She vanquishes and kills the Cat and escapes. Wickedness is let loose upon the world.

Michel Larionov

48 Design for the stove in the set

Pencil and watercolour
51.5 × 30.5 cm
Signed in watercolour: M. Larionow
Inscribed in pencil in Russian:
Top left 'izrazets' (tile)
Top right 'obraz izraztsov' (shape of and image on tiles)
Bottom 'izraztsi po obraztsam 3 verkhu/raspredelenie tochno kak na pechke/pokazani' (tiles according to the shape and image of the 3 above arranged exactly as shown on the stove) '"Russkie Skazki"' (Russian Tales)
Inscribed on verso in pencil in Russian (not in the artist's handwriting, except the word 'St Sebastian'): 'No 21 Pech iz baleta "Kikimora" (Russkie Skazki)/1916 pervii raz postavlena v St Sebastian'/(No 21 The stove from the ballet *Kikimora* (Russian Tales) 1916 first produced in St Sebastian)

Provenance
Jacques Spreiregen Collection, Paris
Sotheby's, Belgravia, 17 November 1971, lot 51
Woodhouse, London
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 47

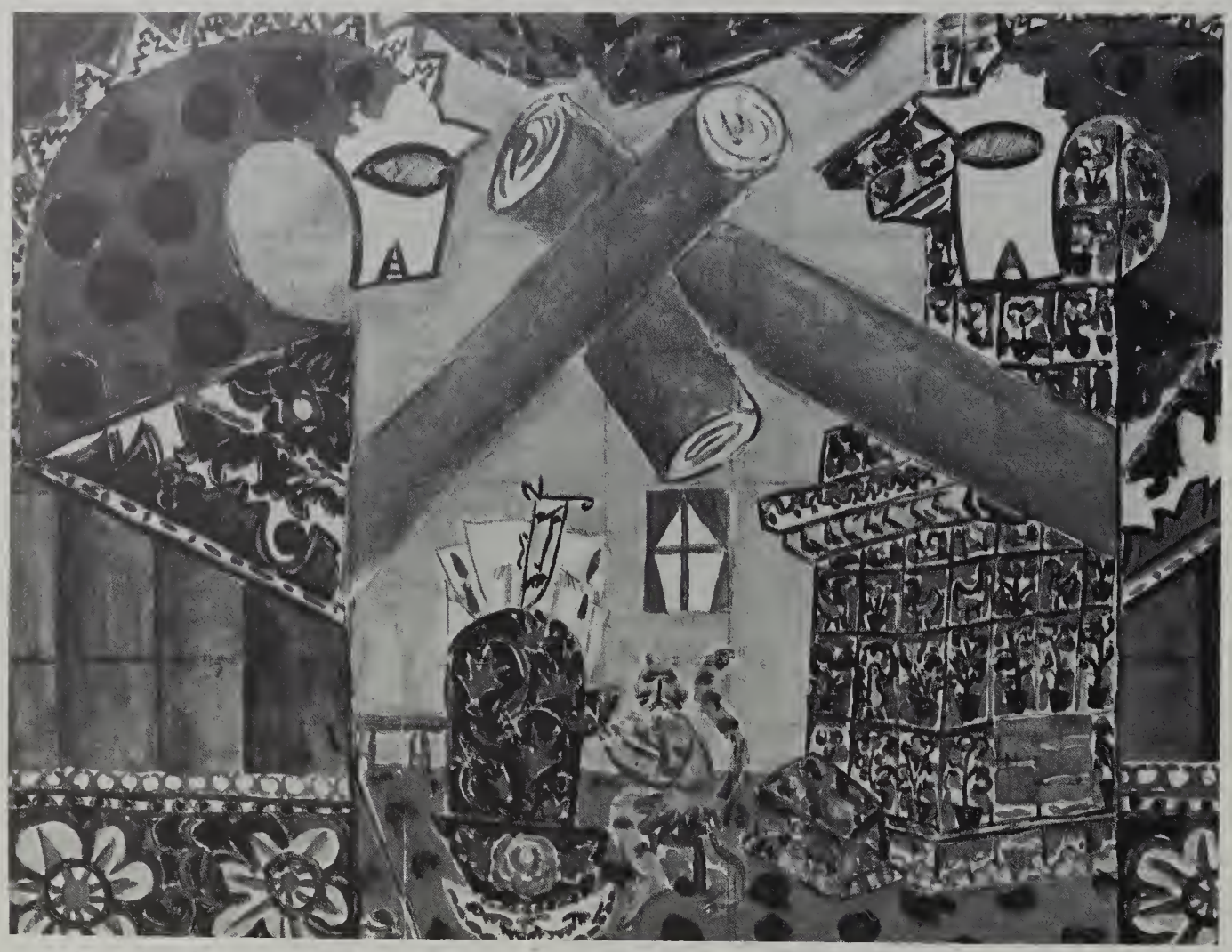
Exhibitions
Leeds, City Art Gallery, *A Retrospective Exhibition of paintings and designs for the theatre – Larionov and Goncharova*, 9–30 September 1961, no. 52
(This exhibition, arranged by the Arts Council of Great Britain, was also shown in Bristol, City Art Gallery, 14 October–4 November 1961 and in London, Arts Council Gallery, 16 November–16 December 1961)

Literature
B Propert, W.A., *The Russian Ballet in Western Europe 1909–1920* (London, 1921)
M.-G.-M. (Michel Georges-Michel), unidentified cutting (Paris, 5 September 1916)
Quittard, Henri, 'Courier des Théâtres', unidentified newspaper (Paris, 13 May 1917)
Schneider, Louis, 'Musique', *Le Figaro* (Paris, 13 May 197)

Collections
COSTUME DESIGNS
London, Victoria and Albert Museum

Larionov first met Diaghilev in 1903. In 1906 he helped Diaghilev arrange the huge exhibition of Russian paintings in a setting designed by Bakst at the Salon d'Autumne in Paris and which subsequently became known as the first Russian 'season'. Although their close friendship continued until Diaghilev's death in 1929, Larionov was primarily an easel painter and was involved with the Ballets Russes as a designer in only four productions: *Le Soleil de Minuit* in 1915, *Les Contes Russes* in 1917, *Chout* in 1921 and *Renard* in 1922 (revived 1929).

It was Larionov who suggested the idea of a series of short ballets based on Russian fairy tales and both Diaghilev and Massine, the choreographer, became enthusiastic. The first tale, performed on its own in 1916, was *Kikimora*. In 1917 Massine and Larionov added two more ballets: *Bova Korolevitch* and *Baba-Yaga*. These, with danced interludes and an epilogue, were first performed as *Les Contes Russes* at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris on 11 May. In 1918 they added more tales and the choreography was reworked. The final version, which consisted of a *Dance Prelude*, *Kikimora*, *Peasant Jest*, *Lament of the Swan Princess*, *Bova Korolevitch*, *The Dragon's Funeral*, *Baba-Yaga* and an *Epilogue* was first performed at the London Coliseum on 23 December.



1 Set design for Kikimora. Reproduced in W. A. Popért, The Russian Ballet in Western Europe 1909–1920 (London, 1921) (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

2 Costume design for Kikimora (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

3 Costume design for The Cat (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

This design for *Kikimora* is a detailed drawing for the stove which was an important feature of the set. As can be seen in the illustration of the whole design (fig. 1) the stove entirely occupied the right-hand side of the stage. It was painted not to be in human scale but in scale with the cat. The space left blank in the detailed design is for the huge log which comes across the stove. Larionov has been very particular about exactly how his tiles of pots of flowers, cockerels and double-headed eagles should be painted. He has not designed a regular pattern and sometimes the cockerel is reversed. Larionov did not leave this part of the painting to the whim of the scene painter.

The whole setting is in the very bright, almost garishly bold colours which were traditionally used in Russian folk art. The patterns and the stylised flowers derive from similar decorations on *lioubki* (Russian peasant prints on paper, wood or glass) which Larionov greatly admired and collected. The almost barbaric Russian-ness was excused: 'Le peintre Larionov, de qui nous avions vu en 1915 la réalisation du *Soleil de Nuit*, semble exprimer les légendes russes en décors, en costumes, en accessoires qui ont des formes abruptes et heurtées, brutalement colorées, de jouets primitifs.'[1]

This is a Russian peasant's hut, but a fantastical, fairy story hut. A peasant would never have had a stove as grandly decorated as this one but he would have dreamt of having one. The design for *Kikimora* was seen as being 'la première étincelle d'une explosion de modernisme russe.[2]

Notes

1 Schneider, Louis, *Musique* (Paris, 13 May 1917), cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)

2 M.-G.-M., unidentified cutting: 'from Bilbao' (Paris, 5 September 1916), (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)

L'Enfant de l'Amour

Film adapted for the screen by Marcel L'Herbier from the play by Henry Bataille

Director: Marcel L'Herbier
Cameraman: Victor Armemise
Sets: Lucien Aquettand
Costumes: Jacques Manuel
Composers: Raoul Moretti and Joseph Szule
Producer: Pathé-Nathan

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS
Liane Orland: Emmy Lynn
Aline: Marie Glory
Nellie Rantz: Marcelle Pradot
Maurice Orland: Jaque Catelain
Paul Rantz: Jean Angelo

RELEASED
10 October 1930 (shooting finished 20 March)

Synopsis
Liane Orland, a music-hall star, has for seventeen years been the mistress of Paul Rantz, a distinguished political figure. She has a son, Maurice, by a previous liaison whom she neglects. But at a grand tennis party at her country house Maurice meets Rantz's daughter, Nellie, who is attracted to him. Rantz returns to town where he is given an important post and he decides to end his relationship with Liane. She is broken-hearted and confides her grief to her son. He is moved by her confidence and decides to help his mother. The opportunity presents itself when Nellie, by now infatuated with Maurice, comes to stay in his flat and he decides to blackmail Rantz by disclosing this fact. He calls on Rantz and a violent scene follows. Rantz begins to understand how much the boy loves his mother and forgives the attempted blackmail. Rantz is reconciled with Liane. But Maurice understands that they have no time for him. He leaves for America with his girl friend, Alice, bitter in the knowledge that there is no place for an illegitimate son in their world.

Jacques Manuel

49 Design for Emmy Lynn's costume as Liane Orland

Pencil, watercolour and silver paint (on tracing paper)
39.1 × 28.9 cm
Unsigned
Undated
Inscribed in pencil: 'L'ENFANT DE L'AMOUR/'Mme EMMY LYNN'

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 92

Exhibitions
London, Annely Juda Fine Art, *Theatre* (arranged by Charles Spencer), 2 October–2 November 1974, no. 167
(This exhibition was also shown in Cologne, Galerie Bargera November–December 1974, Basel, Galerie Liatowitsch, January–February 1975, Milan, Galleria Milano, March–April 1975)

Literature
B Moussinac, Louis, 'Le Décor et le Costume au Cinéma', *Art et Décoration* L (Paris, 1926)
Manuel, Jacques, 'Esquisse d'une histoire du costume au cinéma', *La Revue du Cinéma*, no. 19–20 (Paris, Autumn 1949)
Manuel, Jacques, *Le Costume Cinématographique*, Lecture at I.D.H.E.C. (Paris, *c.* 1952)

Manuel was designing a black and white movie and he deliberately only uses black and white paint with silver paint to give the texture and the glitter that the costume would have on the screen. It is not unusual for designers of films to use only black and white and various shades of grey when designing for black and white films even though the costumes and the sets were made in colour. But Manuel was one of the first film designers to make his drawings on tracing paper. This technique has a dual purpose. The tracing paper approximates to celluloid for the effect and the design is easy to copy for the costumier.

This design is for one of Emmy Lynn's scenes as a music-hall star. This film was L'Herbier's first talking picture. He called it a 'cinephonic play'. Designing costumes for films is quite different from designing costumes for the theatre. First the designer has to be aware of what is photogenic and secondly, as Manuel himself wrote: 'A l'inverse du théâtre où le corps de l'acteur ne compte qu'en tant que masse, dans l'art cinématographique, c'est le corps, le visage qui cerne l'écran et vers lesquels, tel un microscope, se penche, de plus en plus près, l'objectif.'[1] In close-up the set disappears but the costume remains. Also, in real life and in the theatre the

Note
1 Manuel, Jacques, 'Esquisse d'une histoire du costume de cinéma', *La Revue du Cinéma*, no. 19–20 (Paris, Autumn 1949)

costume is usually only seen from one angle but in films the camera can see a costume from any angle. So in films the same costume may have to be made differently several times in order to look the same from the different angles of the camera. 'Le point de vue de l'oiseau comme celui du chien doit donc être envisagé.'[2]

There is also a time lapse of at least six months between shooting a film and screening it to the public which creates a problem for the costume designer of contemporary films. Fashion changes very quickly. The designer has to anticipate the new fashion. Hollywood tended to ignore this problem and created its own fashion but Manuel was one of the French designers to appreciate these problems early on and to solve them.

Note
2 *Ibid.*

1 Emmy Lynn and Jaque Catelain in L'Enfant de l'Amour (National Film Archive, London)

2 *Emmy Lynn (right) in L'Enfant de l'Amour*
(National Film Archive, London)

Willuska Talera

50 An oriental dancer

Pencil, indian ink, watercolour, gouache and gold paint
32.6 × 25.6 cm
Signed in ink: Willuska Talera
Dated: 1919

Provenance
Sotheby's, London, 10 July 1969, lot 231
Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York
Galerie Arnoldi-Livie, Munich
Sotheby's, London, 17 May 1978, lot 17

Although the recent provenance of this drawing has been established and it has been exhibited in both the Leonard Hutton Galleries in New York and in the Galerie Arnoldi-Livie in Munich, nothing is known about the artist.

It has been described in the sale catalogues as a 'costume design for an oriental female dancer'. It seems to me, however, that it is a purely imaginative drawing which may have been an illustration to a story and that it was not done as a costume design for the theatre. While even greater nudity is now commonplace in variety shows, such nakedness as this would have been considered to be improper on stage in 1919. The costume is also too impractical for it to be a theatre design. The swirling brown drapery behind the girl is merely a decorative feature which completes the design; it cannot be part of the costume itself. The artist has certainly drawn her inspiration from the Orient but it has become imprecise; the details are a mixture of Indian, Chinese and Siamese and the colours are muted. This is not the Orient of Bakst. It is a European idea of an oriental dancer, an artist's interpretation, and it is a charming and successful composition.

Willucka Talera 1919.

[51] 1 *Programme cover for Toute Nue!! at Concert Mayol (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)*

Toute Nue!!

Revue in two acts and forty scenes by Léo Lelièvre, Henri Varna and Fernand Rouvray

Director: Henri Varna
Choreographers: Mme Bigiarelli, J.-S. Fisher, L. Douglas
Costume designers: Aumont, José de Zamora, Pol Rab, Vilpelle, Bayansky
Set designers: Ronsin, Bertin, Deshays, Arnaud, Roger Durand
Producer: Oscar Dufrenne
Composers and arrangers: Paul Nast, Chantrier
Song writers: René Mercier, Chantrier, Moretti, Vincent Scotto, Roger

PRINCIPAL PERFORMERS
Rose Amy, Palau, Gaby Montbreuse, Roseray and Cappella

FIRST PERFORMANCE
Concert Mayol, Paris, 26 March 1924

José de Zamora

51 Design for the costume of the Black King

Pencil, indian ink, watercolour and gold paint
32.4 × 25.1 cm
Signed in pencil: José de Zamora
Undated
Inscribed in pencil: 'Le Roi'
Inscribed on verso in pencil in various hands: '1104/Arm No 2 cse 17 No 2/B-cse-6 No 11/1748/6 xxxiii/ 13/6 (1101)'
Stamped on verso: 'D'

Le Roi

José de Zamora

José de Zamora

52 Design for the costume of the Black Queen

Pencil, indian ink, watercolour and gold paint
32.2 × 25 cm
Signed in pencil: José de Zamora
Undated
Inscribed in pencil: 'La Reine'
Inscribed on verso in pencil in various hands: '1100/Arm No 2 cse 17 No 2/B-cse 6 No 11/1748/6 xxxiii/ 13/6/1100'
Stamped on verso: 'D'

la Reine

Jean Gamon

José de Zamora

53 Design for the costume of the Black Knight

Pencil, indian ink, watercolour and gold paint
32.3 × 24.9 cm
Signed in pencil: José de Zamora
Undated
Inscribed in pencil: 'Le cheval'
Inscribed on verso in pencil in various hands: '1105/Arm No 2 cse 17 No 1 [crossed out] 2/B-Cse 6-No 11 [in ink crossed out]/1748/6 XXXIII/13/6, (1105)'
Stamped on verso: 'D'

José de Zamora

54 Design for the costume of the Red Castle

Pencil, watercolour and gold paint
32.4 × 24.9 cm
Signed in pencil: José de Zamora
Undated
Inscribed in pencil: 'La Tour'
Inscribed on verso in pencil in various hands: '1103/Arm No cse 17 No 2/B-Cse 6-No 11 [crossed out]/1748/6 XXXIII/136 (1103)'
Stamped on verso: 'D'

La Tour

Joseph Zamora

José de Zamora

55 Design for the costume of the Red Bishop

Pencil, watercolour and gold paint
32.4 × 24.9 cm
Signed in pencil: José de Zamora
Undated
Inscribed in pencil: 'Le fou'
Inscribed on verso in pencil in various hands: '1101/Arm No 2 cse 17 No 2/B-cse 6-No 11 [crossed out]/1748/6 xxxiii/13/6 (1101)'
Stamped on verso: 'D'

Le fou -

Joie d'amour.

José de Zamora

56 Design for the costume of the Red Pawn

Pencil, watercolour and gold paint
32.4 × 24.9 cm
Signed in pencil: José de Zamora
Undated
Inscribed in pencil: 'Le pion'
Inscribed on verso in pencil in various hands: '1102/Arm No 2 Cse 17 No 2/B-Cse 6-No 11 [crossed out]/1748/6 XXXIII/13/6 (1102)'
Stamped on verso: 'D'

Literature for [51]–[56]
B Marchès, Léo, '*Toute Nue!*', unidentified newspaper (Paris, 30 March 1924)
Fréjaville, Gustave, '*Toute Nue!!*', *Comoedia* (Paris, April 1924)
Patin, Jacques, '*Au Concert Mayol*', unidentified newspaper (Paris, 1 April 1924)
Héros, Eugène, 'Les Folies-Bergère', *La Revue des Folies-Bergère* (Paris, n.d.)
Saint-Estève, 'Le Palace', *L'Art et le Nu au Music-Hall*, no. 2 (Paris, 1924)
Briquet, '*La revue: ça . . . c'est Paris*', *Paris*, no. 7 (1927)
Dorante, 'José de Zamora reste à Paris', *Comoedia* (Paris, 1928)
Perret, Paul 'L'Art du Costume au Music Hall', *Paris Music-Hall*, no. 196 (Paris, 1 September 1929)
Blanquet, Marc, 'Les Amants de Venise', *France-Soir* (Paris, *c.* 1954)

There were 900 costumes in this revue called *Toute Nue!!*. These designs for chess pieces were for one of the scenes in the last number of the first act called *La Boîte de Jeux*. The games were: Les Dominos, Le Double 6, Les Echecs, Le Jeu d'Oie, Le Tric-Trac, Le Jeu des Dames, Les Cartes, Le Mah Jong and Les Javeux-Javeux. The game of chess was a ballet danced by the Bigiarelli Ballerinas; there were twenty-four of them so it was not a whole game. (They also danced the dominos.) Liliane Lucey was the Castle but the programme does not specify whether she was red or black. This big number before the interval was the only one in the show for which Zamora designed the costumes. Deshays and Arnaud designed the sets.

Zamora had begun as an assistant to Poiret, the couturier, and learnt from him the complex craft of designing and making costumes. He was already working for him when Erté arrived from Russia in 1913. During that year, because Poiret was already too committed to undertake all the work himself, Erté and Zamora were given the job of designing the costumes for *Le Minaret* at the Théâtre de la Renaissance. This was for them both their first work for the

Le pion
Luis de Zamora

theatre. In 1914 Erté quarrelled with Poiret but Zamora continued to work for him as his chief assistant. For the 1920–21 season Poiret was commissioned to design the costumes for *Paris qui Jazz* at the Casino de Paris then under the direction of Léon Volterra. Zamora did most of the drawings and this began his long association with the Casino (fig. 1). From then on Zamora worked almost exclusively for theatre and for music-hall in particular.

Throughout his long career Zamora worked for most of the big revue theatres in Paris (see Chronology) designing both sets and costumes with great verve and style. He was not an exquisite draughtsman like Erté but he was a highly skilled and talented craftsman who understood precisely the secret of how to clothe the female body. His designs are essentially working drawings and as he would have to make hundreds of drawings for a single production he developed a kind of personal shorthand for his drawing and painting of the figure. His invention went into the design of the costume itself. Over the years he created an astonishing number of variations on the single most important theme in revue which is dressing the 'nude'. 'Le nu de la revue *Paris* sait être chaste. C'est une question de proportions. Quand un corps de femme est parfait, il ne saurait choquer personne. Ici, jamais le moindre laisser-aller. Jamais, peut-être, on ne vit de femmes plus nues, mais leurs insignifiants costumes sont traités avec tant d'art que par un miracle de paradoxe, le nu est toujoiurs habillé.'[1] Zamora, as this critic recognised, mastered the art of chaste eroticism with his costumes but his name is not mentioned and is hardly known. It is surprising that theatre critics of revue almost never credit the name of the designer when what they are writing is as much about the theatrical effects he has created as about the performers.

By the early 1920s French music-hall had established the format, which is still broadly followed today, of a succession of scenes with different and contrasting sets and costumes. The forty scenes and 900 costumes in *Toute Nue!!* is not an unusually large quantity but it was more than one designer could sensibly undertake. Several designers, therefore, are usually engaged to work on a revue. The 1920s also happened to be a period when a number of great designers appeared whose talents were especially sympathetic to this new style of entertainment: Erté, George Barbier, Gesmar, Zig, Paul Colin, Brunelleschi, Zamora.

Traditionally and not surprisingly, the numbers in music-hall are arranged in two acts of crescendos of spectacle with the first climax, known as the 'first act curtain', coming before the interval. It is difficult to gauge the desired crescendo during rehearsal as the full effect of any particular scene is not really known until there is an audience in the theatre. Therefore the order of a revue programme is often changed, and as the reaction of audiences varies during a run so the order is changed again. The success of a revue depends to a great extent on the overall design and on the order of the programme being the best to build up the anticipation, excitement and satisfaction of the audience. However, the number before the interval and the final number are almost always set from the start; the tinkering is done with the numbers in between. The order is the responsibility of the director. Henri Varna (1887–1969) was the most brilliant and successful director ever to stage revue in Paris and, with his partner Oscar Dufrenne, effectively controlled French music-hall for more than fifty years, presenting his shows at the Empire, Concert Mayol,[2] Le Palace,[3] Théâtre Mogador, Théâtre de la Renaissance, Théâtre Marigny and, from 1920 to 1969, at the Casino de Paris. José de Zamora did most of his work for the theatre for Varna.

Everyone always hopes that a revue will have a long run; indeed, a long run is necessary before there can be any profit on the capital invested.[4] So a costume, however scant, may have to be remade several times and the same costumes may be used for different scenes in other revues. It is therefore essential for the wardrobe to be able to keep track not only of the costumes themselves but also of the original designs. The inscription on the reverse of these designs are various identification marks put on them at different times by wardrobe staff. 'Arm' is an abbreviation for *armoire* (wardrobe) and 'cse' for *caisse* (box).

Notes

1 Briquet, *Paris*, no. 7 (1927), writing about *La Revue: ça . . . c'est Paris*, from a cutting (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris)

2 Originally called the Concert Parisien but re-named after the singer Félix Mayol (1872–1941)

3 Originally called the Alcazar

4 Michel Gyarmathy, the present artistic director of the Folies-Bergère has written: 'La première année, on amortit les frais, la deuxième année on gagne un peu d'argent pour payer les impôts, la troisième année les recettes servent pour le prochain spectacle et la quatrième année, ça marche toujours plus faiblement que les trois premières, il reste un peu de bénéfice évidemment que nous partageons avec les deux cent cinquante personnes qui travaillent ici.' *Le Groupe TSE* (Paris, 1973)

2 Programme cover for Sensations, 1955, at Casino de Paris (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

PAGES 236 AND 237
3 Double page spread in the souvenir programme of the Folies-Bergère, 1929 (Theatre Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

c 1956
Casino de Paris

Walery, Paris.

En haut : JUANA MOURIER — MYREL — FREMYETT — VISIROVA

UNE FLEUR DANS

Costumes exécutés par Max WELDY,

Wolery, Paris.

Eva Constantino

En haut : Norma Norée
Diana

LA FOURRURE
d'après les maquettes de José de Zamora.

Bakst or not, and when

When Bakst began to work for the theatre he found his true vocation. After the first seasons of the Ballets Russes he quickly became so famous that his designs were much sought after and they soon became relatively expensive. In the exhibition at The Fine Art Society in London, June 1914 of *Watercolours by Artists of the Gazette du Bon Ton* Bakst showed six costume designs for *La Légende de Joseph*. They were priced between 28 and 80 guineas. The highest price of any other picture (except two by Bernard Boutet de Monvel at 140 guineas and 72 guineas) was 36 guineas. The other artists' work was priced: Arnoux 4–8 guineas, Drésa 5–24 guineas, Valentine Gross, with her popular interpretations of the Ballets Russes, 6–32 guineas, Marty 4–14 guineas, Lepape 6–24 guineas, Barbier 8–32 guineas.

From 1910 until his death in 1924 Bakst was so busy working on different productions that he always had a number of assistants. This is normal practice when working on large productions involving hundreds of costumes, props and several sets. This makes it difficult to be positive about what is by Bakst and what is by an assistant although Bakst always supervised everything and would not allow anything to leave his studio without his approval. Often Bakst made the original design which his assistants copied for the costumier.

Bakst's fame also encouraged imitators and forgers because they realised they could get a good price for their work. A gullible public accepted almost anything with a signature. The main period for the production of forgeries was immediately after the artist's death. Bakst's reputation declined slightly through the '30s and '40s to be revived by Richard Buckle's *Diaghilev Exhibition* in 1954. He is again the most famous (and one of the most expensive) theatre designers. Forgeries are appearing again and have even been included in serious exhibitions.

In considering the work of Bakst, therefore, there are always three questions: what is by Bakst alone? what is by Bakst and an assistant, or an assistant alone? what is a forgery?

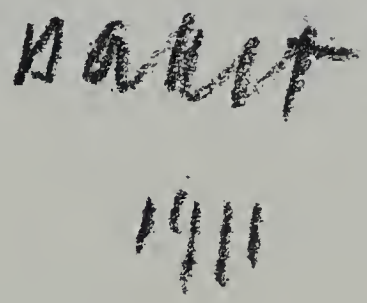
When a forger has equated the character of Bakst with colour only and not with drawing the fake is easily spotted. Although Bakst changed his style over the years he never lost his sense of line. He was a portrait painter and he knew everything about the human figure, especially the female figure, and how clothes would fit round that figure. Bakst's designs always have mass and reality however extravagant some of the poses are. By looking at half a dozen designs made by Bakst himself at different periods a forgery becomes clearly discernible from the real thing.

Bakst, very conscious of his fame and of the importance of his work signed nearly everything he did himself and the work which had been done in part or in total by an assistant when he approved of the result. As he changed the style of his drawing so he changed the style of his signature. The signature provides the real clue to dating the designs. The Thyssen Collection is particularly interesting because it contains examples of Bakst's work and his signature of every period except the very earliest when he still signed his name in Russian.

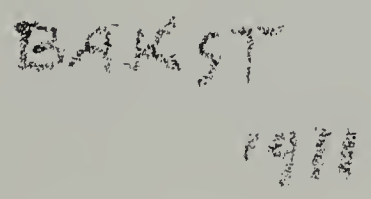
Bakst was also careful about dating his work. Dates are left out when he thought the drawing was unimportant or when he made another version of a drawing he had originally done earlier.

Bakst also always used the best quality French, wove and laid, watermarked paper for his designs. In the end it is the sheer quality in everything which is the telling factor.

1 Signature in Russian capital letters.
The final letter is a 'hard' sign which was used in Russia until the orthography changed after the revolution. Used by Bakst before 1910 for book or magazine illustrations for publication.

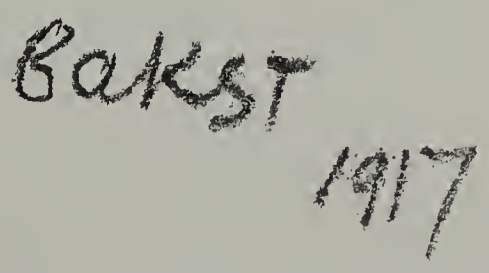


2 Signature on *Le Dieu Bleu* [6].
This quick signature was used by Bakst on designs which were not good enough for exhibition (for one reason or another) and would therefore not be sold. Used between 1909 and about 1915. It is not unlike the signature in Russian script.

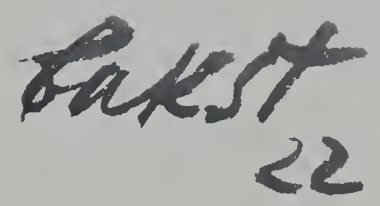


3 Signature on *Le Dieu Bleu* [4].
Careful, printed signature in pencil on designs which would or could be reproduced in souvenir programmes or other publicity material and articles in magazines. Eventually also for exhibition. Contemporary with 2 above.

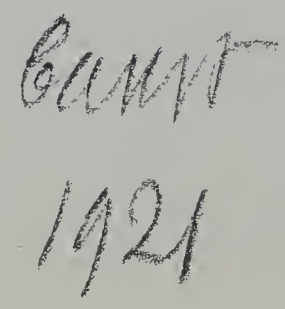
4 Signature on *La Pisanelle ou La Mort Parfumée* [10].
A more casual version of 2 above and is even more like the Russian signature on the early work. Contemporary with 2 and 3 above.



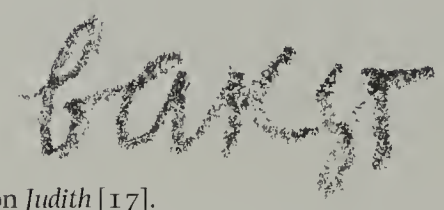
5 Signature on *Sadko* [11].
This style of signature begins about 1916, develops slightly until about 1920.



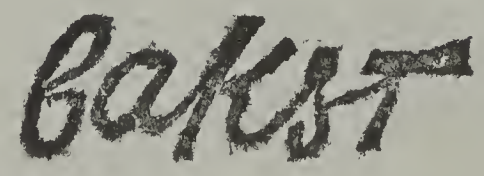
6 Signature on *Le Dieu Bleu* [7].
Development of style used in 5 above from about 1920, but a more careful version.



7 Signature on *The Sleeping Princess* [13].
A quick version of 6 above showing further change. Used for less important work. But an essential identifying mark.



8 Signature on *Judith* [17].
Signature in watercolour used from about 1922. He also continued to sign his work in pencil in this style. A further slight variation from 6 above.



9 The stamped signature on [23].
Not actually like any real signature but closest to 5 above. Not used by Bakst. But that does not mean necessarily that a work which bears the stamp is not by Bakst. It does however presuppose a high degree of doubt about the genuineness of the work.

Exhibitions

These are listed in two parts neither of which is exhaustive. Wherever possible, the details of the exhibitions have been taken from the catalogue but quite often even the catalogue does not give precise dates

GROUP SHOWS
Major exhibitions of theatrical and decorative art (pure painting exhibitions have been excluded) in which the work of one or more of the artists represented in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection was exhibited. Their names follow the title.
During the last twenty years or so the best opportunity for seeing the work of all these artists has been during the viewing days of the continuing series of specialist sales arranged by Sotheby's in London and New York, and, less often, by Christie's in London. Although these are not formal exhibitions they have been included in this list. The date given is that of the sale.

ONE-MAN SHOWS
One-man shows under the name of the artist. But Gontcharova and Larionov have been grouped together because they were really inseparable, particularly when it came to exhibiting their work for the theatre.

GROUP SHOWS

1910 20 June–9 July, Paris, Galerie Bernheim
Les artistes Russes: Décors et costumes de théâtre et tableaux
(Bakst, A. Benois)

1911–12 St Petersburg, Academy of Fine Arts
Iskusstvo v Knige i plakate (*Book and poster art*)
(Bakst)

1912 Paris, Galerie Georges Petit
La Comédie Humaine
(Barbier)

1913 Paris, Galerie Levesque
Les Collaborateurs de la Gazette du Bon Ton
(Barbier, Erté, Zamora)

1914 Zurich, Kunstgewerbemuseum,
Theaterkunst
(Bakst)

June, London, The Fine Art Society
Watercolours by Artists of the Gazette du Bon Ton
(Bakst, Barbier)

1920 Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs
La Mode du XX Siècle vue par les Peintres
(Barbier)

1921 Paris, Galerie Lucien Vogel
Les Collaborateurs de la Gazette du Bon Ton
(Barbier)

London, Whitechapel Art Gallery
First Russian Exhibition of Arts and Crafts
(Gontcharova, Larionov)

1922 3 June–31 July, London, Victoria and Albert Museum
International Theatre Exhibition
(A. Benoit (sic), Gontcharova, Larinov (sic))
(This exhibition transferred from Amsterdam)

1923 Paris, Galerie Charpentier
Les Dames d'Aujourd'hui par les Artistes Français
(Barbier)

Paris, Galerie Paul Guillaume
Les Peintres du Thêatre Kamerny de Moscov
(Exter)

1924 Venice, Biennale
Russian Avant-garde painters of the theatre and cinema
(Exter)

1925 Paris, Hôtel Jean Charpentier
(Bakst, A. Benois)

1927 London, Victoria and Albert Museum
Modern French and Russian Designs for Costume and Scenery
(Bakst, A. Benois, N. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1928 February–March, London, Whitechapel Art Gallery
International Theatrical Art
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

May–June, Brussels, Palais des Beaux Arts
Art Russe Ancien et Moderne
(Bakst, A. Benois, N. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs
Quelques Illustrateurs du Livre Moderne
(Barbier)

1929 December, Paris, Galerie Vignon
Peintures de nos jours appartenant à Serge Lifar
(Gontcharova, Larionov)

Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Pavillon de Marsan
Ballets Russes de Diaghilev
(Bakst, A. Benois)

1930 March, London, Claridge Gallery
The Russian Ballet
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

14–28 October, Paris, Galerie Billiet-Pierre Vorms
Exposition Rétrospective de Maquettes, Décors & Costumes exécutés pour la Compagnie des Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilew
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

London, Arthur Tooth & Sons
Serge Lifar Collection
(Gontcharova, Larionov)

1933 February–March, Vienna, Künstlerbund Hagen
Der Tanz
(Bakst, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

Paris, Musée Galliéra
L'Art décoratif au Théâtre et dans la Musique
(Bakst, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

New York, Julian Levy Gallery
25 years of Russian Ballet from the Collection of Serge Lifar

1934 16 January–26 February, New York, Museum of Modern Art
International Exhibition of Theatre Art
(Bakst, Gontcharova, Larionoff (sic))

Paris, Galerie Georges Petit
Nijinsky
(Bakst, A. Benois)

Northampton, Massachusetts, Smith College
Serge Lifar Collection
(Bakst, A. Benois)
(This exhibition was also shown at Cleveland Art Museum and Cincinnati Art Museum)

1935 4 June–13 July, London, 1 Belgrave Square
Russian Art
(Bakst, A. Benois, N. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1936 September–October, Vienna, Nationalbibliothek
Internationale Ausstellung für Theaterkunst
(Gontcharova, Larionov)

1937 Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Pavillon de Marsan
Le Décor de la Vie de 1900–1925
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Larionov)

1938 June–July, London, The Leicester Galleries
The Dance: An Exhibition of paintings, Drawings and Sculpture by Artists, Past and Present
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionow (sic))

1939 March–May, Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Pavillon de Marsan
Ballets Russes de Diaghilew 1909 à 1929
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1946 London, National Gallery
Ballet Design
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1948–49 Paris, Galerie Charpentier
Danse et Divertissements
(Paul (sic) Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova)

1950 16–29 November, London, Walker's Gallery
Russian Painting of the period known as Mir Iskusstvo
(Bakst, A. Benois)
(This exhibition has been inaccurately recorded to have been at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool)

Oxford, Ashmolean Museum
The Braikevitch Collection
(Bakst, A. Benois)

1951 Paris, Galerie Charpentier
Deux Siècles d'Elégance 1715–1915
(Bakst)

1953 London, New Burlington Galleries
Ballet Designs from the John Carr-Doughty Collection
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1954 August–September, Edinburgh, College of Art
The Diaghilev Exhibition
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)
(This exhibition was enlarged and transferred to London, Forbes House, 3 November 1954–16 January 1955)

Leningrad, Arts Academy, Museum of Scientific Research
Paintings by Russian artists XVIII to beginning XX Century
(Bakst)

1955 20 September–5 December, Vienna, Künstlerhaus
Europäische Theaterausstellung
(A. Benois)

1956 London, London Museum
Anna Pavlova Commemorative Exhibition
(Bakst)

1959 22 March–19 April, Indianapolis, Indiana, John Herron Art Museum
50 years of Ballet Designs
(Bakst, A. Benois)
(This exhibition was also shown in Hartford, Connecticut, Wadsworth Atheneum, 3–31 May, San Francisco, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, 11 July–16 August, and was circulated by the American Federation of Arts, September 1959–September 1960)

1961 17 June–16 July, Hove, Museum of Art
Russian Art and Life
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova)

1962 15 March–14 April, London, Grosvenor Gallery
2 decades of experiment in Russian Art (1902–1922)
(Gontcharova, Larionov)

May, New York, Wildenstein Gallery
Stravinsky and the Dance
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1964 10 October–22 November, Eindhoven, Stedelijk van Abbe-Museum
Beeldend Experiment op de Planken
(Bakst, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

Munich, Haus der Kunst, Pinakothek Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen
Secession – Europäische Kunst um die Jahrhundertwende
(Bakst)

1965 Naples
Mostra internazionale de Scenografica Contemporanea
(Bakst)

Hartford, Connecticut, Wadsworth Atheneum
The Lifar Collection of Ballet, Set and Costume Design
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

Milan, Galleria Milano
Art Déco

1966 Leicester, Art Gallery
The John Carr-Doughty Collection
(Bakst. A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

3 March–16 May, Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs
Les Années "25"
(Bakst, A. Benois, Erté)

25 June–17 July, Spoleto, Palazzo Collicola
Tre secoli di Disegni Teatrali
(Bakst)

Paris, Théâtre des Champs-Elysées
Commémoration des Ballets Russes et du centenaire de la naissance d'Erik Satie
(Bakst)

New York, Harkness House for Ballet Arts
Stage and Costume designs by Russian Painters from the collections of Mr & Mrs Nikita D. Lobanov-Rostovsky and Mr George Riabov
(Bakst, A. Benois, N. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1967 London, Victoria and Albert Museum
Ballet Designs and Illustrations 1581–1940
(Bakst, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

Coventry, Belgrade Theatre
Diaghilev Ballet Designs
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1 June–31 August, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art
Russian Stage & Costume Designs
(Bakst, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)
(This exhibition was circulated by the International Exhibitions Foundation, 1967–69)

14 June–17 September, New York, Gallery of Modern Art
A Survey of Russian Painting: Fifteenth Century to the Present
(Bakst, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

24 October–18 November, London, Grosvenor Gallery
Aspects of Russian Experimental Art 1900–1925
(Bakst, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

Berlin, Akademie der Kunst
Avant-garde 1910–1930 Ost-Europa
(Bakst)

13 June, London, Sotheby's
Diaghilev Ballet Material
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1967–68 *An exhibition of Ballet Designs, costume and set drawings chiefly for Diaghilev Ballets drawn from the collection of John Carr-Doughty*
(This exhibition was toured by the Arts Council of Great Britain to Plymouth, Blackpool, Reading, Keighley and Birmingham)

1968 Moscow, Tretiakov Gallery
Pre-revolutionary Russian and Soviet Art
(Bakst)

18 July, London, Sotheby's
Diaghilev Ballet Material
(Bakst, A. Benois, N. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

19 November–31 December, London, Grosvenor Gallery
Ballet at the Grosvenor
(Bakst, Erté, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1969 15 May–15 September, Strasbourg, Ancienne Douane
Les Ballets Russes de Serge de Diaghilev 1909–1929
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

San Antonio, Texas, Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute
Explosion: Color: Paris: 1909, Russian Theatre Design, Drawn from the Collection of Robert L. B. Tobin
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

9–10 July, London, Sotheby's
Serge Diaghilev/Max Reinhardt
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Talera)

15–16 December, London, Sotheby's
Serge Diaghilev, Boris Kniaseff, Max Reinhardt
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1970 6 May, New York, Parke-Bernet Galleries Inc.
Designs for Costumes and Decors, Ballet, Opera, Theater
(Bakst, A. Benois, Erté, Gontcharova, Larionov)

24 June, London, Sotheby's
Casino de Paris
(Barbier, Erté, Gontcharova, Manuel, Zamora)

1971 Oslo, Art Centre
Contemporary Theatrical Staging

21 May–31 August, New York, Vincent Astor Gallery
Collection of Boris Kochno
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

Minneapolis, Minnesota, Minneapolis Institute of Arts
Art Déco
(Barbier)

3 June, London, Sotheby's
Ballet, Theatre and Opera Decor and Costume Designs, Portraits and Posters
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

7 July, London, Sotheby's
20th century Paintings, watercolours and drawings from the collection of Leonide Massine
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova)

17 November, London, Sotheby's Belgravia
Costume and Decor Designs, Portraits and Posters for Ballet, Theatre and Opera
(Bakst, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1972 23 June–3 September, Paris, Musée Galliéra
Hommage à Diaghilew, Collections Boris Kochno et Serge Lifar
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

25 October–15 January 1973, Paris, Galerie du Luxembourg
Illustrateurs des Modes et Manières en 1925
(Bakst, Barbier, Erté, Zamora)

11–26 March, Milan, Museo Teatrale alla Scala
Ricordo di Serge de Diaghilev
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)
(This exhibition was also shown in Venice, Teatro la Fenice, 5–20 April)

1972–74 *Diaghilev and Russian Stage Designers. A loan exhibition of Stage and Costume Designs from the Collection of Mr and Mrs N. Lobanov-Rostovsky*
(This exhibition was circulated by the International Exhibitions Foundation)

1973 New York, Cordier and Ekstrom Gallery
Stravinsky and Diaghilev
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

Petrodvorets, near Leningrad
Russian and Soviet Ballet from the Collection of the Leningrad Theatre Museum
(Bakst)

21 June, London, Sotheby's
Decor and Costume Designs, Portraits, Manuscripts and Posters principally for Ballet
(Bakst, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1974 Hampstead, Long Island, New York, Hofstra University, Emily Lowe Gallery
Diaghilev—Cunningham
(Bakst)

30 May, London, Sotheby's
Costume and Decor Designs for Ballet, Theatre and Opera
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Zamora)

20 June, Paris, Hôtel George v, Ader, Picard, Tajan
Collection Serge Lifar, Les Ballets Russes
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Larionov)

2 October–2 November, London, Annely Juda Fine Art
Theatre: An exhibition of 20th century theatrical designs and drawings
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Manuel, Zamora)
(This exhibition also toured to Cologne, Galerie Bargera, November–December 1975, Basel, Galerie Liatowitsch, January–February 1975, and Milan, Galleria Milano, March–April 1975)

1975 5 June, London, Sotheby's
Ballet and Theatre Material
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Gontcharova, Larionov)

15 June–14 September, Venice, Palazzo Grassi
Omaggio ai disegnatori di Diaghilev
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

Chicago, University of Chicago
The Diaghilev Ballets Russes 1909–1929

1976 26 February–25 April, Le Mans, Musée de Tesse
Visages d'Igor Stravinsky
(Gontcharova, Larionov)

26 June, Monte Carlo, Sotheby's
Ballet, Opéra, Théâtre, Music-Hall, Projets de Costumes et de Décors
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Gontcharova, Larionov)

20 October, London, Sotheby's
Impressionists etc. and Ballet and Theatre Material
(A. Benois, Erté)

7 July–31 October, Munich, Theatermuseum
Bühnenbilder des 20 Jahrhunderts
(Exter)

Palm Beach, Florida, The Society of the Four Arts
The Golden Age of Ballet Design

1976–78 *Stage Designs and the Russian Avant-garde (1911–1929), A loan Exhibition of Stage and Costume Designs from the Collections of Mr and Mrs Nikita D. Lobanov-Rostovsky*
(Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)
(This exhibition was circulated by the International Exhibitions Foundation)

1977 13 February–13 March, Austin, Texas, University of Texas
Russian Painters and the Stage 1884–1965, A loan exhibition of stage and costume designs from the collection of Mr and Mrs D. Lobanov-Rostovsky
(Bakst, A. Benois, N. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)
(This exhibition was circulated by the University of Texas Art Museum, 1978–79)

Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University
Diaghilev's Ballets Russes 1909–1929

Rome, Libreria e Galleria Pan
Diaghilev i balletti russi e il loro tempo

Le Mans, Musée du Mans
La Galaxie Diaghilev 1909–1929

25 May, London, Sotheby's
Ballet and Theatre Material
(Bakst, Barbier, Bertaux, Erté, Gontcharova, Larionov, Zamora)

15 December, New York, Sotheby's
Dance, Theatre, Opera
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

29 November–16 March 1978, Paris, Centre Culturel du Marais
1909–1929 Le Ballets Russes de Diaghilev
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1978 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art
Diaghilev: Costumes and Designs for the Ballets Russes
(Bakst, Barbier, Gontcharova)

17 May, London, Sotheby's
Ballet and Theatre Material
(Bakst, A. Benois, Bertaux, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Manuel, Talera)

24 November, New York, Sotheby's
Dance, Theatre, Opera
(Bakst, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

25 November–19 December, Newcastle upon Tyne, Hatton Gallery
Russian graphic art
(Bakst, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1979 31 May–5 November, Paris, Centre national d'art et de culture, Georges Pompidou
Paris-Moscou
(Bakst, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

Jackson, Mississippi, Mississippi Museum of Art
Dance Image: A tribute to Serge Diaghilev

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale
Diaghilev: Les Ballets Russes

6 June, London, Sotheby's
Ballet and Theatre Material
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

11 October–20 November, Norwich, England, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts
The Diaghilev Ballet in England
(Bakst, Barbier, Gontcharova, Larionov)
(A large part of this exhibition transferred to London, The Fine Art Society, 3 December 1979–11 January 1980)

7–30 November, London, Institut Français
Hommage à Diaghilev
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

6 December, New York, Sotheby's
Dance, Theatre, Opera, Cabaret
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1980 19 January–9 March, San Francisco, Fine Arts Museums
Russian Theatre and Costume Designs
(Bakst, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)
(This exhibition was circulated by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1980–82)

13 March, London, Sotheby's
Ballet and Theatre Material
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Manuel, Zamora)

22 May, New York, Sotheby's
Good American and European Paintings and Ballet, Theatre and Opera Material

14 October–30 November (extended to January 1981), Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris
Igor Stravinsky – la carrière européenne
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

23 October, London, Sotheby's
Theatre, Ballet and Music-Hall Material
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Manuel)

18 December, New York, Sotheby's
Dance, Theater, Opera, Music Hall
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1981 7 April–10 May, Calgary, Ontario, Nickle Arts Museum
Extravaganza!
(Barbier, A. Benois, Zamora)

8 April–26 July, London, Victoria and Albert Museum
Spotlight: Four centuries of Ballet Costume, a tribute to the Royal Ballet
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

4 June, London, Sotheby's
Ballet Designs from the Collection of Mr and Mrs John Carr-Doughty
(Bakst, A. Benois, N. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

12 June, New York, Sotheby's
Dance, Theater, Opera, Music-Hall
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

29 October, London, Sotheby's
Ballet, Theatre and Music-Hall Material
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

15 December, New York, Sotheby's
Dance, Theatre, Opera, Music-Hall and Film
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Zamora)

Houston, Texas, Museum of Fine Arts
The Diaghilev Heritage. Selections from the Collections of Robert L. B. Tobin

Fort Worth, Texas, Kimbell Museum
Costumes for the Ballet: Diaghilev to Balanchine

15 December–15 February 1982, Naples, Museo Diego Aragona Pignatelli Cortes
Mir Iskusstva – il mondo dell'arte
(Bakst, A. Benois)

1982 Venice, Teatro la Fenice
Igor Stravinsky: la carriera europea
(A reduced version of the exhibition in Paris in 1980. Also shown in Milan, Teatro alla Scala)

4 March, London, Sotheby's
Ballet and Theatre Material
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Manuel, Zamora)

27 March, New York, Sotheby's
Modern Haitian and Latin American Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture including a selection of Ballet, Old Master and 19th century drawings
(Bakst, A. Benois, N. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

18 June–29 August, Jackson, Mississippi, Museum of Art
Russian Stage Design, Scenic Innovation, 1900–1930. From the collection of Mr and Mrs Nikita D. Lobanov-Rostovsky
(This exhibition was also shown in Wisconsin, Phoenix, Arizona, New York City and Austin, Texas, 1982–84)

28 October, London, Sotheby's
Ballet and Theatre Material
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Zamora)

10 December, New York, Sotheby's
Modern Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture; Dance, Theatre, Opera
(Bakst, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1983 9 June, London, Sotheby's
Ballet and Theatre Material
(Bakst, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Zamora)

22 June, New York, Sotheby's
Modern Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture. Dance, Theatre and Opera
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Gontcharova)

29 June, London, Christie's
The Modern Movement
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

26 October, London, Sotheby's
Ballet, Theatre and Music-Hall Material: And Impressionist and Modern Paintings, Drawings and Watercolours
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Gontcharova, Zamora)

15–16 December, New York, Sotheby's
Modern Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture, Dance, Theatre and Opera
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1984 Prato, Palazzo Pretorio
L'avventura del Sipario
(A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Larionov)

17 April, London, Christie's
The Modern Movement
(Bakst, N. Benois, Gontcharova)

9 May, London, Sotheby's
Ballet Material and Manuscripts from the Serge Lifar Collection
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

6 June–9 September, Basel, Kunstmuseum
Strawinsky, Sein Nachlass, Sein Bild
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

17 November–12 January 1985, Bristol, Arnolfini Gallery
Artists Design for Dance 1909–1984
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova, Larionov)

21 November, New York, Sotheby's
Dance Theatre Opera Music Hall and Film
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1985 19 January–3 March, Athens, Georgia, Museum of Art
Paris: Women in the Follies
(Barbier, Erté, Zamora)

29 April–31 May, London, The Fine Art Society
Spring '85
(Bakst)
(This exhibition also toured to Edinburgh and Glasgow, Fine Art Society)

28 May, London, Sotheby's
Ballet and Theatre Material
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Zamora)

April–May, Paris, Mairie du xxe arrondissement
4 Siècles de Ballet a Paris
(Bakst, A. Benois, Gontcharova)
(This exhibition was also shown at Mairie du Ier arrondissement, June–September 1985)

San Antonio, Texas, Marion Koogler McNay Art Museum, The Tobin Wing
Bakst and Benois

20 July–24 August, Buxton, Museum and Art Gallery
The Musical Stage (arranged by the Charles Spencer Theatre Gallery)
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov, Zamora)

24 July–3 August, King's Lynn, Town Hall
Erté and the Folies Bergère
(Bakst, Barbier, Erté, Zamora)

1985–86 10 September–27 April, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Theatre Museum Galleries
130 set and costume designs from the Theatre Museum
(Bakst, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

1986 1 March–26 May, Frankfurt am Main, Schirn Kunsthalle
Die Maler und das Theater im 20. Jahrhundert
(Bakst, A. Benois, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

2 March–25 May, Frankfurt am Main, Stadelschen Kunstinstitut
Raumkonzepte–Konstruktivistische Tendenzen in Bühnen- und Bildkunst, 1910–1930
(Bakst, Exter)

23 April, New York, Sotheby's
Dance, Theatre, Opera and Music Hall
(Bakst, Barbier, A. Benois, N. Benois, Erté, Exter, Gontcharova, Larionov)

ONE-MAN SHOWS

Léon Bakst

1911 6 July–15 October, Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Pavillon de Marsan
Oeuvres de Léon Bakst

1912 London, The Fine Art Society
Drawings of Léon Bakst

1913 June–July, London, The Fine Art Society
Drawings by Léon Bakst for Ballets, Plays and Costumes

Berlin, B.P. Cassirer Gallery
Léon Bakst

New York, Berlin Photographic Company
Léon Bakst

1914 4 January–1 February, New York, Fine Arts Academy
Works by Léon Bakst

5 March–1 April, Chicago, Art Institute
Paintings, Drawings and Costume Designs, The Work of Léon Bakst

Cincinnati, Ohio, Cincinnati Art Museum
Special Exhibition of the work of Léon Bakst

St Louis, Missouri, City Art Museum
Paintings, Drawings, Costume Designs: the work of Léon Bakst
(presumably the exhibition from Chicago)

1916 New York, Scott and Fowles
The work of L. Bakst

1917 June, London, The Fine Art Society
Designs for the ballet La Belle au Bois Dormant by Léon Bakst
(for the production by Anna Pavlova in New York)

1919 The Hague, Kunstzall Kleykamp
Tentoonstelling van acquarellen en teekeningen van dan Russischen Kunstenaat Leo Bakst

1920 10–24 April, New York, M. Knoedler & Co.
Water Colors, Drawings and Stage Decorations by Léon Bakst

1922 6–16 December, New York, M. Knoedler & Co.
Recent works by Bakst

1923 Chicago, Art Club
Léon Bakst

1925 5–19 November, Paris, Hôtel Jean Charpentier
Oeuvres de Léon Bakst

1926 Brussels, Galerie du Centaure
Léon Bakst
(This exhibition was also shown in Liège)

1927 May, London, The Fine Art Society
Memorial Exhibition of the work of Léon Bakst

Baltimore, Maryland, Art Center
Textile Designs of Léon Bakst

1928 Paris, Hôtel Jean Charpentier
Oeuvres de Léon Bakst

1929 The Hague, Kunstlerhaus
Leon Bakst

1938 14 July–6 August, Arthur Tooth & Sons
Léon Bakst

1957 Paris, Musée Galliéra
Léon Bakst

1965 London, Arthur Tooth & Sons
Léon Bakst

1966 Leningrad, Theatre Museum
L.S. Bakst centenary exhibition

1967 2–22 May, Milan, Galleria del Levante
Mostra commemorativa dell'opera di Léon Bakst
(This exhibition was also shown in Rome, May–September, Munich, October–November)

1968 The Hague, Geemeente Museum
Ballet in beeld bij Bakst

1972 Paris, Peintres du Spectacle
Hommage à Léon Bakst

1973 3 December–4 January 1974, London, The Fine Art Society
Bakst

1976 21 August–11 September, Edinburgh, The Fine Art Society
Bakst
(This exhibition was also shown in London, The Fine Art Society, 16 September–9 October and subsequently, a major part of the exhibition toured in the USA including San Antonio, Texas, McNay Art Institute and New York, Davis & Long Gallery)

1984 7 August–7 October, Baltimore, Maryland, Benesch Gallery
Léon Bakst: Theatre designs

Alexandre Benois

1926 19 November–3 December, Paris, Hôtel Jean Charpentier
Oeuvres d'Alexandre Benois

1929 Paris, Hôtel Jean Charpentier
Oeuvres d'Alexandre Benois

Paris, Galerie Hirshman
Alexandre Benois

16–31 December, Paris, Galerie Georges Petit
Artistes Décorateurs: Alexandre Benois

1936 London, Storran Gallery
Alexandre Benois

1937 24 June–17 July, Arthur Tooth & Sons
Alexandre Benois

1939 London, Stafford Gallery
Alexandre Benois

1940 London, Storran Gallery
Alexandre Benois

1953 Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs
Oeuvres d'Alexandre Benois

1955 Como, Villa Comunale dell'Olmo
Mostra dei Benois

1959 London, Arthur Tooth & Sons
The Nutcracker Suite

1960 15 December–7 January 1961, London, Arthur Tooth & Sons
The Benois Family
(The other members of the family included Nicolas Benois, Lela Clement Benois, Zena Serebriakova, Catherine Serebriakova, Alexandre Tcherkessoff, Nadia Benois, Peter Ustinov)

1967 Busseto, Parma
Verdi visto dai Benois

1970 28 November–10 January 1971, Milan
Museo Teatrale alla Scala
Alexandre Benois, il Classico della Rivoluzione 1870–1960

1980 2–23 May, London, Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox
Alexandre Benois 1870–1960, Drawings for the Ballet

Erté (Romain de Tirtoff)

Unless otherwise stated, the title of the exhibition was 'Erté'

1920 New York, M. Knoedler & Co.

1925 New York, Madison Gallery

1926 Paris, Hôtel Jean Charpentier

1927 Brussels, Galerie du Studio

1929 Paris, Hôtel Jean Charpentier
New York, William E. Fox Gallery

1934 New York, Waldorf Astoria Hotel

1964 Paris, Galerie Ror Valmar
Formes Picturales

1965 Paris, Galerie Motte
Milan, Galleria Milano

1966 Milan, Galleria Milano
Paris, Galerie Jacques Perrin
Participates in *100 years of Harper's Bazaar*, New York

1967 New York, Grosvenor Gallery
19 September–14 October, London, Grosvenor Gallery
Paris, Galerie Jacques Perrin
Turin, Galleria Viotti
Brescia, Galleria d'Arte Cavaletto

1968 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art
Chicago, Vincent Price Gallery
Hamburg, Neues Kunst-Zentrum
Venice, Galleria Paolo Barozzi

1969 Paris, Galerie René Drouet
Chicago, Vincent Price Gallery

1970 Mexico City, Galeria Arvil
2 September–17 October, London, Grosvenor Gallery
December, Paris, Galerie Proscenium

1971 Parma, Galleria della Rochetta
Rome, Galleria Marina
Milan, Bologna and Palermo, Club dei Bibliofili
New York, Sonnabend Gallery

1972 November, Paris, Galerie Proscenium
Organised by Grosvenor Gallery, London:
London, Brook Street Gallery
Geneva, Lambert Monet Gallery
New York, Rizzoli Gallery

1973 Los Angeles, David Stuart Galleries
New Orleans, Downtown Gallery

1974 7 August–1 September, Portland, Oregon, Portland Art Museum
December, Paris, Galerie Proscenium
Caracas, Galeria Conkright
Madrid, Juana Mordo Gallery
New York, Circle Gallery

1975 New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Circle Galleries

1976 November–December, Paris, Galerie Proscenium
Les Arts déco d'Erté
Tokyo, Shiseido Gallery

1977 May, Paris, Galerie Proscenium
New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego,
Chicago, Circle Galleries
Boston, Gallery in the Square
Denver, Cherry Creek Gallery of Fine Art

1979 December, Paris, Galerie Proscenium

1979–82 United States, Canada, Mexico
Travelling exhibition arranged by the Smithsonian Institution

1982 21 April–19 June, Paris, Galerie Proscenium

Alexandra Exter

The exhibitions listed below were not necessarily 'one-man' shows. Titles of exhibitions are only given when the catalogue has been consulted.

1927 October, Berlin, Der Sturm
Ausstellung Alexandra Exter
Magdeburg, Der Sturm

1928 London, Claridge Gallery

1929 11–23 May, Paris, Quatre Chemins
Alexandra Exter – Théâtre

1937 March, Prague, Musée des Arts et Métiers
Alexandra Exter – Théâtre

1938 Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada

1972 Paris, Galerie Chauvelin

1974 Spring-Summer, New York, Lincoln Center,
Vincent Astor Gallery
Artist of the Theatre – Alexandra Exter

1975 23 October–January 1976, New York, Leonard Hutton Galleries
Alexandra Exter; marionettes

1977 11 May–end June, Cologne, Galerie Gmurzynska
Die Kunstismen in Russland 1907–30
(Twelve designs by Exter were shown; Gontcharova and Larionov also exhibited)

1980 Washington DC, Hirshhorn Museum

Nathalie Gontcharova and Michel Larionov

Titles of exhibitions are only given when the catalogue has been consulted.

1914 June, Paris, Galerie Paul Guillaume

1918 16 April–7 May, Paris, Galerie Sauvage
L'Art Décoratif Théâtral Moderne

1919 11–28 June, Paris, Galerie Barbazanges
Exposition de Gontcharova et de Larionov

1922 New York, The Kingore Gallery
The Gontcharova–Larionov Exhibition

1926 June–July, London, Claridge Gallery (Gontcharova alone)

1931 Paris, Galerie de l'Epoque (Gontcharova alone)

1948 December, Paris, Galerie des Deux Iles

1956 May, Paris, Galerie de l'Institut

1961 15–28 February, Milan, Galleria Schwarz
Larionov–Gontcharova

July–September, Basel, Galerie Bayler

9–30 September, Leeds, City Art Gallery
A Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings and designs for the theatre – Larionov and Gontcharova
(Arts Council of Great Britain Tour: Bristol, City Art Gallery, 14 Oct.–4 Nov. and London, Arts Council Gallery, 16 Nov.–16 Dec.)

1963 September–October, Paris, Musée d'Art
Moderne de la Ville de Paris
Gontcharova–Larionov

1968 February, Turin, Galleria Martano
N. Gontcharova – M. Larionov

1969 17 June–27 September, Paris, Galerie de Paris
Rétrospective Larionov

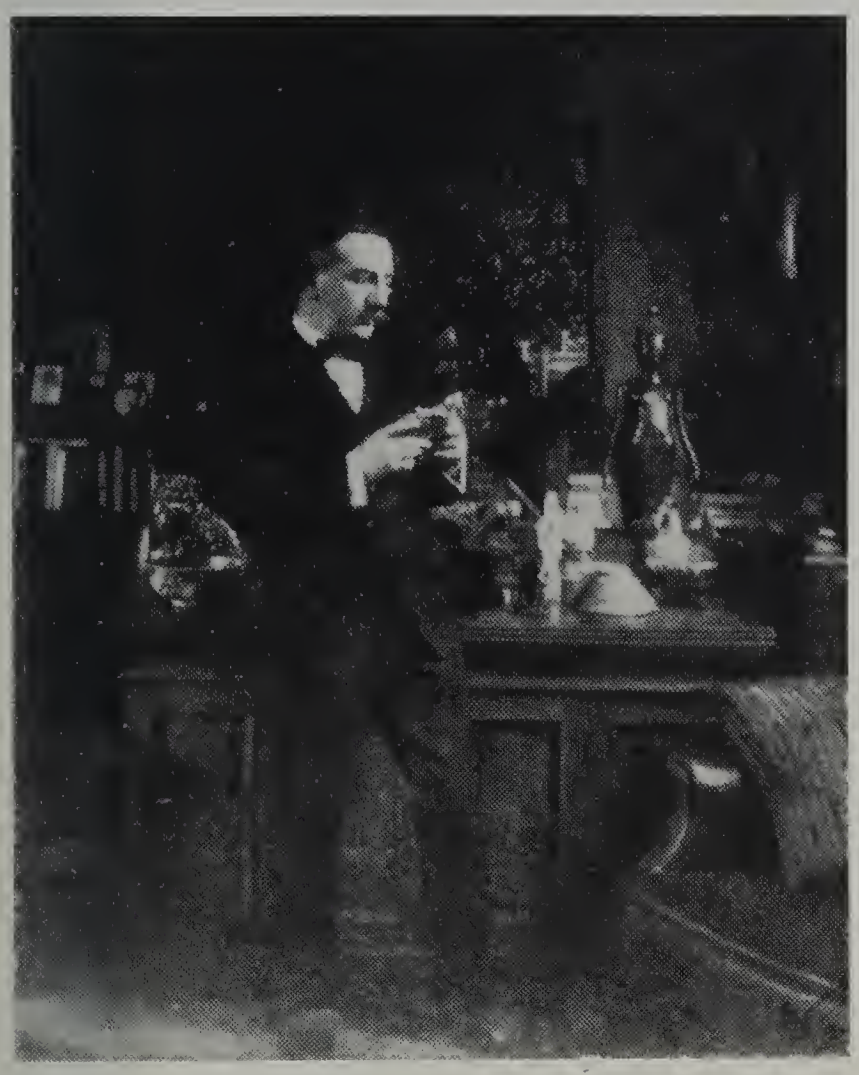
1969–70 Lyon, Musée des Beaux Arts
N. Gontcharova

1975 Bourges, Maison de la Culture
Nathalie Gontcharova

1976 Brussels, Musée d'Ixalles

Chronologies

The chronologies of the artists list the most important facts and concentrate on the artists' work for the theatre and the cinema.
The lists of productions are not definitive.
Only less familiar works are identified as being a ballet, opera or play.
For more information about the lives of the artists and their work outside the performing arts please refer to the Bibliography which follows this section.
Throughout this section, Diaghilev's Ballets Russes is abbreviated to DBR, and references to catalogue entries are given in square brackets.



Léon Bakst in his Paris studio

Léon Bakst

1866 27 April (9 May). Born in Grodno. Lev Samoilovitch Rosenberg of Jewish parents. Family moves to St Petersburg.

1883 Enrols at Academy of Arts as external student.

1886 Subject at Academy for silver medal: Pietà. Paints all figures as poor Jewish people and asked to resign from Academy.
A.N. Kanaev, writer and pedagogue, commissions portrait of Leo Tolstoy; first known work.

1887 Resigns from Academy. Introduced to Chekhov by Kanaev.

1889 Takes name Bakst from maternal grand-mother's side. Painting *Suprugi* (*The spouses*) reproduced in *Vsemirnaya Illiustratsia*. Applies to re-enter Academy but application refused.

1890 Exhibits two paintings at Academy. Meets Alexandre Benois. In Benois' house meets Konstantin Somov, Walter Nouvel, Dimitri Filosofov, Grigori Kalin, and Filosofov's first cousin Sergei Diaghilev.
Travels to Germany, Belgium, France. Visits *International Art Exhibition* in Berlin, stays in Cologne, Aachen, Liège, Paris. Spends many hours in Musée du Luxembourg.

1890–91 Illustrates books for A.F. Devrien publisher.

1890–93 Illustrations for magazines *Khudozhnik* (*The Artist*) and *Peterburgskaya Gazeta*.

1891 Travels to Spain, Italy. Returns September to St Petersburg. Studies watercolour painting under Albert Benois (Alexandre's elder brother).

1893 Grand Duke Alexei Alexeivitch, recommended by Albert Benois and Count Benckendorff, commissions painting for Russian Squadron's visit to France. Exhibits drawings at Figaro gallery in Paris.

1893–99 Lives mostly in Paris. Studies under Jean-Louis Jerome and A. Edelfeld. Frequently visits Louvre. Impressed by Rembrandt, Velasquez, Rubens and Barbizon school. Influenced by ideas of Fortuny.

1895 Paints portrait of Nouvel and Princess Tenisheva.

1896 Visits Spain, Madrid (the Prado) after being paid for portrait of Tzar. Decides to be a portrait painter. Most of the year spent in Russia.

1897 Paints portrait of Yuri Diaghilev, brother of Sergei, and Dimitri Filosofov. Visits Tunisia.

1898 Portrait of Alexandre Benois. Suggests to Diaghilev an exhibition of Russian and Finnish artists. Designs 'logo', covers and illustrations for *Mir Iskusstvo* (*The World of Art*).

1899 Cover design for Imperial Theatres' *Yearbook* edited by Diaghilev. Poster for charity 'Doll' bazaar.

1900 Unveiling in Paris of the painting commissioned by the Grand Duke. Programme cover for Hermitage Theatre, St Petersburg.

1901 Designs, with Serov, costumes for *Sylvia* by Delibes. Benois designs scenes 1 and 2, Korovine scene 3, Lanseray scene 4 (production never staged). Volkonsky resigns from Imperial Theatres. Diaghilev loses his post as editor of *Yearbook*.

1901–1902 Illustrations for *Khudozhestvennie Sokrovishcha Rossii (Art Treasures of Russia)*.

1902 Programme cover for Hermitage Theatre.
22 February. Sets, costumes and props for *Sertsa Markisi* (*Le Coeur de la Marquise*) at Hermitage Theatre, St Petersburg.
14 October. Set and costumes for *Hippolytus* by Euripides at Alexandrinsky Theatre, St Petersburg [1].
Meets widow of N.N. Gritzenko, daughter of P.M. Tretiakov, founder of the Tretiakov Gallery.

1903 Designs vases for Imperial Porcelain Factory.
7 February. Sets and costumes for *Feya Kukol* (*La fée des poupées*) ballet by Bayer at Hermitage Theatre, transferred 16 February to Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg. First real success as designer.
Converts to Lutheranism.
Travels to Menton and decides to go to Athens but is prevented by illness. Travels to Rome.
19 March. Costume for L.V. Sobinov in opera *Mignon* by A. Thomas.
12 November. Marries N.N. Gritzenko.

1904 Illustrates *The Nose* by Gogol. Programme cover for *Swan Lake* by Tchaikovsky at Mariinsky Theatre.
9 January. Set and costumes for *Oedipus at Colonus* by Sophocles at Alexandrinsky Theatre.
16 April. Set and costumes for *Antigone* by Sophocles at private theatre. First collaboration with Ida Rubinstein.
Summer in Finland.

1905 Autumn in Switzerland. First signs of nervous disorder.

1906 Designs setting for exhibition of Russian portraits in Paris and Berlin organised by Diaghilev. Portrait of Diaghilev with Nanny (begun 1904). Cover design for *Alexander III's Russian Museum* by Alexandre Benois. Decorative panel *Elysium* for V. Komissarzhevskaya's Dramatic Theatre, St Petersburg.
Teaches in Zventzev's private school. Portrait of Ida Rubinstein as Antigone. Illustrations for the magazine *Zolotoe Runo* (*The Golden Fleece*).
26 February. Designs *tableaux vivants: The Parting between Napoleon and Josephine* and *Gogol in a summer garden* for charity performance at Mariinsky Theatre.

1907 Son Andrei born.
10 February. Costume for M. Kshessinskaya for *Evnika* ballet by Shcherbatchev for charity performance at Mariinsky Theatre.
10 February. Costume for A. Pavlova and M. Obukhova in *Au clair de la lune* by Chopin (first version of *Chopiniana*) for charity performance at Mariinsky Theatre.
12 March. Sets and costumes for *Otvergnutii Don Juan* (*Don Juan Refused*) play by S. Rafalovitch at 1st studio Theatre, New Theatre, St Petersburg.
May. Key visit to Greece and Crete with Serov.
Portraits of Lapunov and Balakirev in programme of Russian music in Paris.
22 December. Costume for A. Pavlova in *Dying Swan* by Saint-Saëns, costume for Karsavina in *Tanets s fakelom* (*Torch dance*) by Arensky for charity performance at Mariinsky Theatre.

1907–1908 Develops individual and distinctive style of line drawing.

1908 Poster for *Vienna Secession* exhibition. Portrait of Isadora Duncan. Portrait of Golovine for programme of *Boris Godunov* by Moussorgsky in Paris. Lecture in St Petersburg Theatrical Club, *Painting in the future and its relationship with classical art*. Lecture in Moscow, *The Paths of Classicism in Art*. Two costumes for Smirnov for *La Traviata* by Verdi.
3 November. Costumes for Ida Rubenstein for *Salomé* by Wilde at private Mikhailovsky Theatre, St Petersburg. Visits Finland.

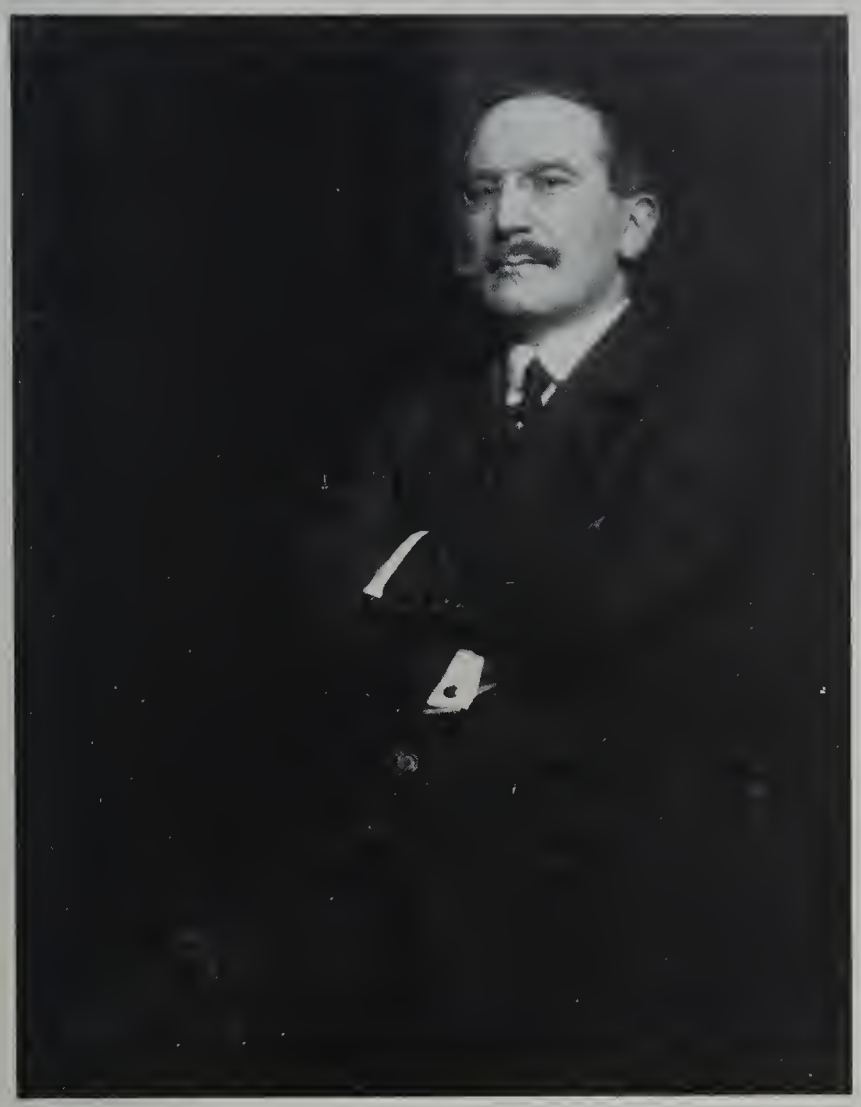
1909 Cover design for *Apollon*. Practically no book illustration after this date. Decides to concentrate on painting. Curtain for V. Komissarzhevskaya's Theatre (V. Meyerhold, director). Boris Anisfeld his assistant.
19 May. Costumes for Nijinsky and Karsavina in the *Blue Bird pas de deux* from *The Sleeping Beauty* by Tchaikovsky, costumes for *Le Festin*, in collaboration with A. Benois, by Glinka and others at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris for DBR.
2 June. Sets and costumes for *Cléopâtre* ballet by Arensky, Taneev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Glinka, Glazunov, Moussorgsky, Tcherepnine at Théâtre du Châtelet for DBR.
7 June. Costumes for *Judith* (Act III) opera by Alexander Serov at Théâtre du Châtelet for DBR. Visits Karlsbad and Venice with Nijinsky and Diaghilev. Paintings of Nijinsky on Lido.

1910 Divorce. Remains on good terms with his wife. Returns to Judaism. Leaves teaching post.
16 January. Costume for M. Kuznetsova in *Thaïs* opera by Massenet at St Petersburg Conservatoire.
22 January. Costume for Pavlova in *Bacchanale* by Glazunov for charity performance in St Petersburg.
11 February. Costume for Nijinsky in *Kobold* by Grieg and *Vostochnii Tanets (Danse orientale)* by Sinding at Mariinsky Theatre. Developed into *Les Orientales* (scenery by K. Korovine) at Opéra, Paris, 25 June for DBR.
20 February. Sets and costumes for *Carnaval* by Schumann for charity performance at Pavlova Hall, St Petersburg. Revived at Theater des Westens, Berlin on 20 May by DBR and with new set at Mariinsky Theatre on 6 February 1911.
4 June. Set and costumes for *Schéhérazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov at Opéra, Paris for DBR [2].
25 June. Costume for the Firebird and Tzarevna in *The Firebird* by Stravinsky at Opéra, Paris for DBR. Designs for *The Brothers Karamazov* (not produced).
Infrequently in Russia after this date.

1911 19 April. Set, costumes and props for *Spectre de la Rose* by Weber at Théâtre de Monte Carlo for DBR.
26 April. Set and costumes for *Narcisse* by Tcherepnine at Théâtre de Monte Carlo for DBR.
22 May. Sets and costumes and poster for *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* by d'Annunzio at Théâtre du Châtelet for Ida Rubinstein.
6 June. Costumes for *Sadko* by Rimsky-Korsakov (sets and most costumes by Boris Anisfeld) at Théâtre du Châtelet. Costumes for Trouhanova and Nijinsky in *La Péri* by Paul Ducas for DBR (not produced) [3].
Sets for *Ivan the Terrible* by R. Ginsburg at Théâtre du Gaieté-Lyrique, Paris. Costumes for *Mefistofeles* by Boïto at Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London (not produced).
3 November. Costumes for Pavlova and Nijinsky in *L'Oiseau d'Or, pas de deux* from Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* at Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London.

1911–12 Costumes for M. Kuznetsov-Benois for Fortunio by Messager, Beatrice by Messager, Mimi in *La Bohème* by Puccini, Salome by Richard Strauss, Madama Butterfly by Puccini, Euridice in *Orpheus* by Glück, Volkhova in *Sadko* by Rimsky-Korsakov, Marguerite in *Faust* by Gounod, Manon by Massenet, Violetta in *La Traviata* by Verdi.
Costume for M. Casati in *indo-persian* dance.

1912 4 May. Sets and costumes for *Hélène de Sparte* by Emile Verhaeren at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris for Ida Rubinstein [8].
13 May. Set and costumes for *Le Dieu Bleu* by R. Hahn at Théâtre du Châtelet for DBR [4], [5], [6], [7].
20 May. Set and costumes for *Thamar* by Balakirev at Théâtre du Châtelet for DBR.



Léon Bakst, c.1912

29 May. Set and costumes for *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* by Debussy at Théâtre du Châtelet for DBR.
8 June. Set and costumes for *Daphnis and Chloe* by Ravel at Théâtre du Châtelet for DBR.
10 June. Set and costumes for *Salomé* by Wilde and Glazunov at Théâtre du Châtelet for Ida Rubinstein.
30 September. Set and costumes for *Papillons* by Schumann orchestrated by Tcherepnine for charity performance at Mariinsky Theatre. Revived at Théâtre de Monte Carlo, 16 April 1914 by DBR.
Costume for Gilda Darthy as Roxane in *Bajazet* by Racine.
Exiled from Russia as a Jew at twenty-four hours' notice. Minister for Foreign Affairs S.D. Sazunov delays exile for two weeks. In Paris by December.

1913 15 March. Set and costumes for *Mary Magdalen* by Maeterlinck at Casino municipal, Nice. Transferred to Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris on 28 May.
15 May. Set and costumes for *Jeux* by Debussy at Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Paris for DBR.
22 May. Set and costumes for scene 4 *Boris Godunov* by Moussorgsky at Théâtre des Champs-Elysées for DBR.
11 June. Sets and costumes for *La Pisanelle ou La Mort Parfumée* by d'Annunzio at Théâtre du Châtelet for Ida Rubinstein [10].
Costume for the Firebird (new variation) and Tzarevitch Ivan.
Set and costumes for *Oriental Fantasy* by M. Ippolitova-Ivanova and Moussorgsky in New York for Pavlova.
Portrait of Ida Rubinstein.

1913–15 Designs for *Orpheus* by Roger-Ducas at Mariinsky Theatre (not produced).

1914 5 January. Costumes for *Hullo, Tango!* at Hippodrome, London.
14 May. Costumes for *La Légende de Joseph* by Richard Strauss (scenery by José-Maria Sert) at Opéra, Paris for DBR.
Costumes for M. Kuznetsova for *Leila*.
Because of illness replaced by M. Dobuzhinsky as designer for *Midas* for DBR. Elected member of St Petersburg Academy giving him the right to live in Russia. First World War prevents return.

1915 Costumes for the Firebird and Tzarevitch Ivan (new variations).
Set and costumes for the *Enchantment* from *The Sleeping Beauty* by Tchaikovsky for DBR.

1915–16 New set and costumes for *Schéhérazade*.

1916 Visits Switzerland.
31 August. Sets and costumes for *The Sleeping Beauty* by Tchaikovsky at Hippodrome, New York for Pavlova.

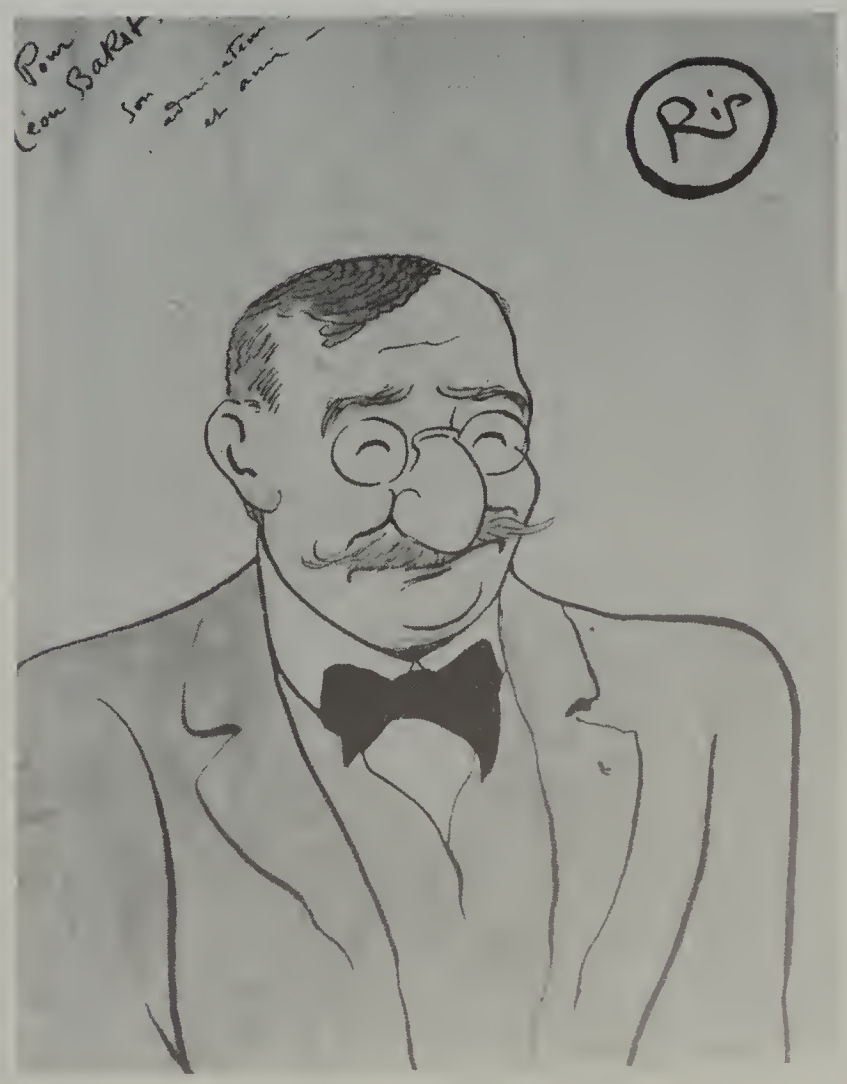
1917 12 April. Set and costumes for *Papillons* by Schumann, orchestrated by Tcherepnine at Teatro Costanzi, Rome for DBR.
Friendship with Picasso. Quarrels over designs for *La Boutique Fantasque* with Diaghilev, who replaces him with André Derain.
Costumes for *Sadko* by Rimsky-Korsakov (not produced) [11].
Designs for revues at Marigny Theatre, Paris.

1917–23 Works on designs for *Phaedre* by d'Annunzio for Ida Rubinstein.

1918 Costumes for *La Boutique Fantasque* for DBR (not used).

1919 Costumes for *Aladin ou la lampe merveilleuse*, revue at Théâtre Marigny, Paris. Set for *Nocturne* by Chopin (not produced).

Caricature of Léon Bakst by Rip, c.1915–16



Portrait of Léon Bakst by Amadeo Modigliani, 1917

1921 2 November. Sets and costumes for *The Sleeping Princess* by Tchaikovsky at Alhambra Theatre, London for DBR [12], [13]. Portrait of Ida Rubinstein.

1922 9 April. Costumes (with Soudeikine) for Marie Kousnezoff's *Spectacle d'Art Russe* at Théâtre Fémina, Paris.
1 May. Set and costumes for *Artémis Troublée* by Paul Paray at Opéra, Paris for Ida Rubinstein.
18 June. Sets and costumes for revival of *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* by d'Annunzio at Opéra, Paris for Ida Rubinstein [15], [16].
24 June. Costumes (with George Barbier) for the *Bal du Grand Prix* at Opéra, Paris.
13 October. Costumes for *Judith* by Henry Bernstein at Théâtre du Gymnase, Paris [17].
Set for *Mavra* by Stravinsky not used. Caused final quarrel with Diaghilev. Scenario, sets and costumes for *Lâcheté* and *Moskva* at Théâtre Fémina, Paris. Costume for M. Casati for The Queen of the Night in the *Magic Flute*.

1923 8 June. Sets and costumes for *Phaedre* by d'Annunzio at Opéra, Paris for Ida Rubinstein [20], [21], [22].
12 November. Sets and costumes for *La Nuit Ensorcelée* by Chopin at Opéra, Paris.
Decorates Evergreen Theatre, Baltimore (see [18]).

1924 10 July. Set and costumes for *Istar* by Vincent d'Indy at Opéra, Paris for Ida Rubinstein.

26 December. Dies in Paris.

George Barbier

1882 Born in Nantes.
Studies at the School of Art.

1908–10 Studies in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in the studio of Jean-Paul Laurens.

1909–10 Uses pseudonym of Edward William Larry and signs his name either 'E William Larry' or 'Edward W. Larry' and occasionally 'Larry'.

1911 Exhibits at the Galerie Boutet de Monval, Paris. Inspired and influenced by the Russian Ballet seasons.

from 1912 Exhibits regularly at the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs.

1912–26 Contributes illustrations and articles to *La Gazette du Bon Ton, Le Journal des Dames et des Modes, Fémina, Vogue, Les Modes, Comoedia Illustré, La Vie Parisienne, Falbalas et Fanfreluches* (1922–26), *Le Bonheur du Jour* (1920–24).

1913 Illustrates *Danses de Nijinsky* by François de Miomandre, *Auteros* by de Gramont, programme cover for Bouffes-Parisiens theatre.

1914 Illustrates *Thamar Karsavina* by J.L. Vaudoyer, *La Cantique des Cantiques, Modes et Manières d'Aujourd'hui* by Henri de Regnier. Costumes and sets for *Lysistrata* by Maurice Donnay at Théâtre de la Renaissance, Paris.

1917–21 Contributes illustrations and articles to *La Guiralande des Mois*.

George Barbier by Charles Martin, 1927

1918 Costumes for *Lysistrata* by Maurice Donnay at Théâtre Marigny, Paris.

1919 Sets and costumes for *Casanova* by Maurice Rostand at Bouffes-Parisiens theatre, Paris. Illustrations for *Les Feuillets d'Art*.

1920 Sets and costumes for *Le Tapis Persan* at Casino de Paris. Costumes for Paulette Duval in *Danseuse Espagnole* at Théâtre des Ambassadeurs, Paris. Sets and costumes for *Amarilla* by Glazunov, ballet produced by Pavlova.

1921 Illustrates *Les Bains de Bade* and *Le Carrosse aux deux lézards verts* both by René Boylesve. Illustrates *La Dernière Nuit de Don Juan* by Edmond Rostand for the magazine *L'Illustration*.

1922 24 June. Costumes (with Léon Bakst) for the *Bal du Grand Prix* at Opéra, Paris.
Illustrates *Les Chansons de Bilitis* by Pierre Loüys, *Personnages de Conédie* by Albert Flament. Sets and costumes for *La Dernière Nuit de Don Juan* by Edmond Rostand at Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, Paris [25], *Casanova* by Lorenzo Azertis at Empire Theatre, New York, *Marion Delorme* by Victor Hugo.

from 1922 Sets and costumes for *L'Invitation à la Valse* by Weber, *Flûte Enchantée* by Drigo, *The Firebrand* by Edwin Justus Mayer, *La Pompadour* by Leo Fall, *Manon, Fille Galante* by Henri Bataille and Albert Flament.

1923–28 Sets and costumes for the Folies-Bergère. Credits include: *En Pleine Folie* (1923), *Coeurs en Folie* (1924), *La Folie du Jour* (1926), *Un Vent de Folie* (1927), *La Grande Folie* (1928).

1924 Sets and costumes for the film *Monsieur Beaucaire* [26]. Illustrates *La Pécheresse*.

1925 Illustrations for *Vogue*.

1927 Sets and costumes for *Monsieur Beaucaire* at the Théâtre Marigny, Paris.

1928 Costumes for the film *Le Tournoi dans la Cité*. Illustrates *Poèmes en Prose* by Maurice de Guérin, *Les Fêtes Galantes* by Verlaine, *The Romance of Perfume* by Richard Le Gallienne. Costumes for *The Red Robe* at the Shubert Theater, New York.

1929 Illustrates *Le Roman de la Monnaie* by Gautier. Costumes for *Histoires de France* by Sacha Guitry at the Théâtre Pigalle, Paris.

1930 Sets and costumes for the films *The Big Pond* and *The Sap from Syracuse*. Costumes for *Paris qui Remue* at the Casino de Paris.

1932 Dies in Paris.

Alexandre Benois

1870 4 (17) May. Born in St Petersburg.

1893–96 Exhibits at Society of Russian Watercolour Artists in St Petersburg.

1894 Graduates from Moscow Law School. Marries Atia Kind.

1895 Sets and costumes for *Orpheus* by Glück (not produced).

1896 First visit to Paris and Versailles.

1897 Series of paintings on the theme of Louis XIV.

1898 The magazine *Mir Iskusstvo* (*The World of Art*) founded.

1899–1904 Contributes to *Mir Iskusstvo* edited by Diaghilev.

1900 Sets and costumes for *The Vengeance of Love* by Alexander Taneev at Hermitage Theatre, St Petersburg (produced 1902).

1901 Set for Act I of *Sylvia* ballet by Delibes (Acts II and III by Korovine, Act IV by Lanseray, costumes by Bakst and Serov: not produced).

1902 Sets and costumes for *Gotterdämmerung* at Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg (produced 1903).

1901–1903 Contributes to monthly *Khudozhestvennie Sokrovishcha Rossii* (*Art Treasures of Russia*).

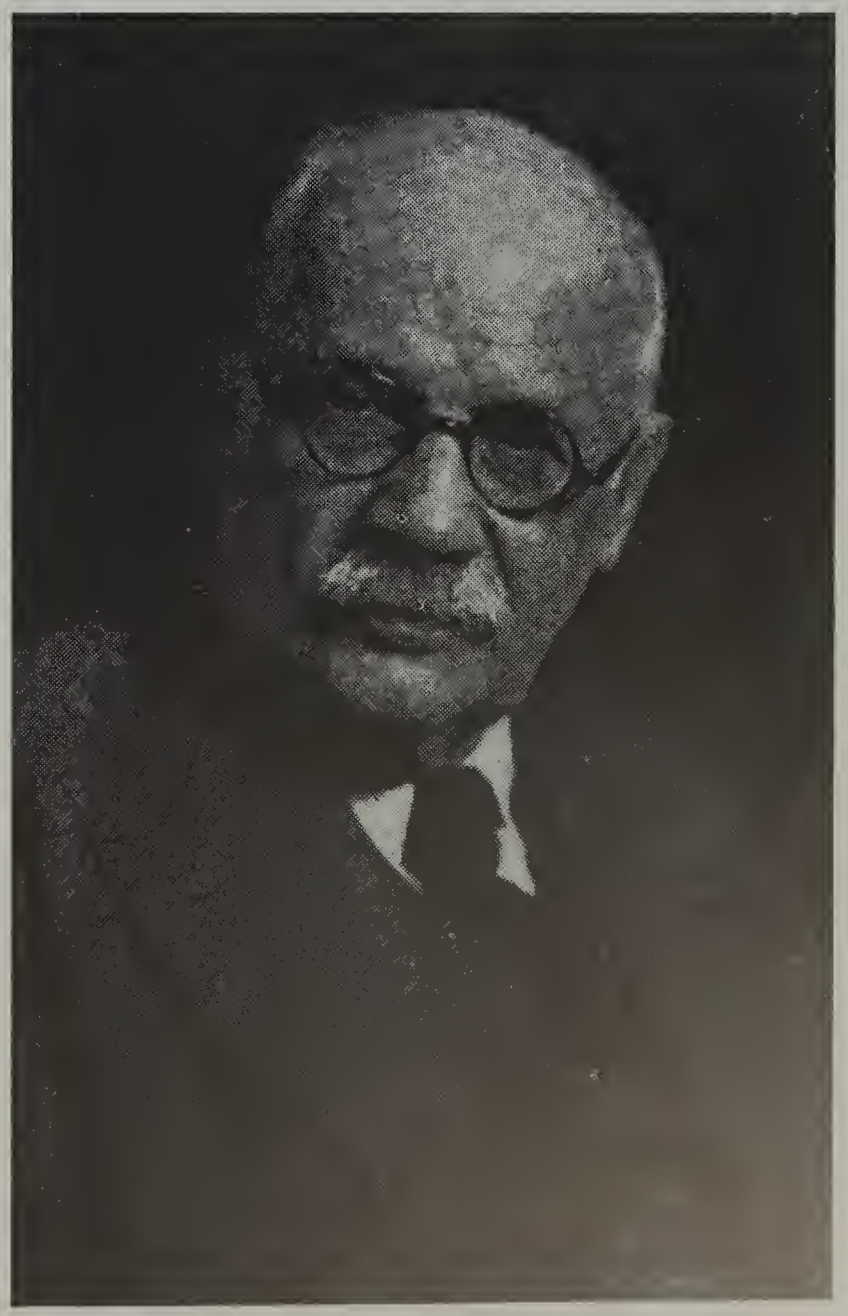
1906–1908 Contributes to *Zolotoe Runo* (*The Golden Fleece*).

1907 Sets, costumes and libretto for *Pavillon d'Armide* by Tcherepnine at Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg. Curtain for Starinnii Teatr (Old Theatre), St Petersburg. Costumes for *Yarmarka na indikt sv. Denisa* (*The Fair on St Denis' Day*) by N. Evreinov at Starinnii Teatr. Set for Act IV of *Boris Godunov* by Moussorgsky/Rimsky-Korsakov at Opéra, Paris, 1908.

1907–1908 Contributes to *Moskovskii Ezhenedelnik* (*Moscow Weekly*).

1907–13 Contributes to *Starie Godi* (*Old Times*).

1908 Sets, costumes and libretto for *The Cheated Buyer* ballet by Clementi at Russian Merchants' Club, St Petersburg. Sets and costumes for *Pramater* (*Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*) by Franz Grillparzer at V. Komissarzhevskaya's Dramatic Theatre, St Petersburg.



Alexandre Benois

Portrait of Alexandre Benois by George George

1908–17 Contributes to *Rech* (*Speech*).
[For a comprehensive list of all the articles, see Mark Etkind, *Aleksandr Nikolaevitch Benois: 1870–1960* (Leningrad/Moscow, 1965)]

1909 Sets and costumes for *Pavillon d'Armide* by Tcherepnine, *Les Sylphides* (*Chopiniana*), *Le Festin* in collaboration with Bakst by Glinka and others at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, for DBR.

1910 Sets and costumes for *Giselle* at Théâtre national de l'Opéra, Paris for DBR. Libretto for *Schéhérazade*, credit denied by Diaghilev.

1911 Sets, costumes and libretto for *Petrushka* at Théâtre du Châtelet for DBR.

1912 Sets and costumes for *Les Fêtes* ballet by Debussy (not produced), *Tartuffe* and *Le Malade Imaginaire* by Molière at Moscow Art Theatre (latter produced 1913).

1913 Sets and costumes for *Le Mariage Forcé* by Molière, *La Locandiera* by Goldoni at Moscow Art Theatre.

1914 Sets and costumes for *Le Rossignol* by Stravinsky at Opéra, Paris for DBR; *Pir vo vremia chumi* (*The feast during the plague*), *Kammennii Gost* (*The Stone Guest*), *Mozart i Salieri* all three by Pushkin at Moscow Art Theatre.

1914–17 Designs panels (Asia and Europe) for Kazan Station, Moscow.

1916–22 Illustrates *Mednii Vsadnik* (*The Bronze Horseman*) by Pushkin.

1916 Sets and costumes for *Les Sylphides* and *Petrushka* at Teatro Real, Madrid.

1917 Sets and costumes for *Petrushka* at Mariinsky Theatre, Petrograd (produced 1920; reproduced 1962 at Maly Theatre, Leningrad). Contributes to *Novaya Zhizn* (*New Life*).

1918–22 Series of lithographs of Peterhof.

1919 Sets and costumes for *Pavillon d'Armide* at Mariinsky Theatre, Petrograd.

1920 Sets and costumes for *Petrushka* at Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow (reproduced 1964); *Tzarevitch Alexei* by Dimitri Merezhkovsky, *The Merchant of Venice* by Shakespeare, *The Servant of Two Masters* by Goldoni (produced 1921) at Bolshoi Dramatic Theatre, Petrograd.

1921 Sets and costumes for *The Queen of Spades* opera by Tchaikovsky at Opera and Ballet (Mariinsky) Theatre, Petrograd [29]; *Les Précieuses Ridicules* and *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* by Molière at Bolshoi Dramatic Theatre, Petrograd.

1922 Sets for scenes 1, 3, 4 and 5 and props for *Julius Caesar* by Shakespeare at Bolshoi Dramatic Theatre, Petrograd (sets for scenes 2, 6, 7 and 8 and costumes by Nicolas Benois). Sets and costumes for *Le Mariage d'Aurore* (with Gontcharova) at Opéra, Paris for DBR.

1923 Sets and costumes for *Grelka* (*The Hot Water Bottle*) from the French *La Boule* by Meilhac and Halévy at Bolshoi Dramatic Theatre, Petrograd; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare at People's House Theatre, Petrograd; *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* by Molière at Academic Theatre, Petrograd; *La Dame aux Camélias* by Dumas at Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris for Ida Rubinstein.

1924 Sets and costumes for *The Fan* by Goldoni (not produced); set for Act III of *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie* by Edouard Pailleron at Academic Theatre, Petrograd; sets and costumes for *Giselle* by Adam at Opéra, Paris; *Philémon et Baucis* and *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* both by Gounod at Théâtre de Monte Carlo for DBR.

1925 Sets and costumes for *L'Idiot* by W. Bienstock and Nozière based on Dostoevsky's novel, at Théâtre du Vaudeville, Paris for Ida Rubinstein, the ballet *The Happy Deception* at the London Coliseum and for the film *Napoléon*. Projects for *The Fan* by Goldoni.

1926 Sets and costumes for *The Marriage of Figaro* by Beaumarchais at Bolshoi Dramatic Theatre, Leningrad.
Leaves Russia to settle in Paris.

1927 Sets and costumes for *Ruy Blas* by Victor Hugo at Comédie Française, Paris; *L'Imperatrice des Rochers* by Honegger, *Les Noces de Psyché et de l'Amour* at Opéra, Paris; *The Sleeping Beauty* at Casino, Paris; *Le Coq d'Or* by Rimsky-Korsakov at Opéra, Paris.

1928 Sets, costumes and libretto for *Nocturne* by Borodin, *La Bien-aimée* by Schubert and Liszt, sets and costumes for *Le Baiser de la Fée* by Stravinsky, *David*, *Boléro* by Ravel, *Princesse Cygne* [30] by Rimsky-Korsakov all at Opéra, Paris for Ida Rubinstein.

1929 Sets and costumes for *Les Enchantements d'Alcine* by Georges Auric at Opéra, Paris for Ida Rubinstein. Sets (with Eric Aés) for film *Le Capitaine Fracasse*.

1930 Sets and costumes for *Sadko* by Rimsky-Korsakov, *Petrushka* at Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Paris; *Petrushka* at Copenhagen; *La Valse* at Opéra, Paris. Sets for the film *Mikhail Strogov*. Sets and costumes for *Amphion* by Paul Valéry and Honegger at Opéra, Paris; *Manon* by Massenet at Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires; *Sadko* at Teatro Reale, Rome.

1932 Sets and costumes for *Carmen* at Opéra, Paris; *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

1934 Sets and costumes for ballets *Sémiramide* by Honegger, *Boléro* and *Diane de Poitiers* both by Ravel at Opéra, Paris.

1935 Sets and costumes for *Psyché* ballet by Franck at Opéra-Comique, Paris.

1936 Sets and costumes for *Petrushka* for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Costumes for film *Don Quixote*.

1938 Sets and costumes for *The Nutcracker*, *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* by Massenet at La Scala, Milan.

1940 Sets and costumes for *Les Deux Tisserands* at Théâtre Marigny, Paris [31], [32], *Graduation Ball* at Theatre Royal, Sydney.

1941 Sets and costumes for *Eugene Onegin* by Tchaikovsky at Théâtre Gaîté-Lyrique, Paris.

1942 Sets and costumes for *Don Philippe* by K. Konstantinov at Théâtre Pigalle, Paris.

1945 Sets and costumes for *Swan Lake*, *Raymonda* by Glazunov in New York. Costumes and make-up for film *The Idiot* from Dostoevsky's novel.

1946 Sets and costumes for *La Bohème* at Cambridge Theatre, London.

1947 Sets and costumes for *Petrushka* at La Scala, Milan.

1948 Sets and costumes for *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Il Trovatore*, *Faust* at La Scala, Milan; *Giselle*, *Le Coq d'Or* at Opéra, Paris.

1949 Sets and costumes for *La Favorita*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, sets for Act I and II for *Andrea Chénier* at La Scala, Milan. Sets and costumes for *Petrushka* at Opéra, Paris, *The Birch Tree* by K. Konstantinov in Paris, *Les Sylphides* at Sadler's Wells, London.

1950 Sets and costumes for *Swan Lake*, *Les Sylphides*, *Falstaff* at La Scala, Milan.

1951 Sets and costumes for *Giselle*, *Werther* at La Scala, Milan.

1952 Sets and costumes for *Petrushka* at La Scala, Milan.

1953 Sets and costumes for *Tosca* at La Scala, Milan.

1954 Sets and costumes for *Eugene Onegin* at La Scala, Milan.

1955 Sets and costumes for *Le Spectre de la Rose*, *Andrea Chénier* at La Scala, Milan.

1956 Sets and costumes for *Petrushka* at Staatsoper, Vienna [33].

1957 Sets and costumes for *Manon Lescaut* by Puccini at La Scala, Milan; *Petrushka* at Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London; *The Nutcracker* at Royal Festival Hall, London, for Festival Ballet.

1958 Sets and costumes for *Petrushka* at La Scala, Milan.

1959 Sets and costumes for *Il Trovatore* at La Scala, Milan.

1960 9 February. Dies in Paris.

Nicolas Benois

Unless otherwise stated credits are for productions at Teatro alla Scala, Milan

1901 2(16) May. Born in Oranienbaum, St Petersburg, son of Alexandre Benois.

1922 Sets for scenes 2, 6, 7 and 8 and costumes for *Julius Caesar* by Shakespeare at Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow.

1924–25 Sets and costumes for Nikita Balieff's Chauve-Souris company in Paris [34], [35].

1926 Costumes for *Khovantshchina* by Moussorgsky. Sets for *Delitto e Castigo* by Pedrollo.

1927 Sets and costumes for *Khovantshchina* and *Tzar Saltan* both by Rimsky-Korsakov, *Hänsel and Gretel* by Humperdink at Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires. Sets and costumes for *Boris Godunov*.

1929 Sets and costumes for *Die Walküre* at Opera, Rome. Sets and costumes for *Tzar Saltan*.

1930 Sets and costumes for *Siegfried* at Opera, Rome.

1931 Sets and costumes for *Götterdämmerung* at Opera, Rome.

1932 Sets and costumes for *Giuletta e Romeo* by Rossato and Zandonai, *Belkis Regina di Saba* by Respighi.

1933 Sets and costumes for *Khovantshchina*.

1934 Sets for *Il Figliuol Prodigo* by Zanardini and Ponchielli.

1935 Sets and costumes for *Boris Godunov*, *La Fiamma* by Guastalla and Respighi. Sets for *Ernani*.

1936 Sets for *L'Amore delle tre Melarance* ballet by Sanzogno.

1937–70 Director of productions at La Scala, Milan.

1937 Sets and costumes for *Mosé* by Rossini. Sets for *La Bohème*.

1938 Sets for *Sadko*, *Macbeth*. Sets and costumes for *Aida* at Terme di Caracalla, Rome.

1939 Sets and costumes for *Coppelia* and *Aida* at Opera, Rome.

1940 Sets and costumes for *The Sleeping Beauty*. Sets for *Oberon* by Weber, *Poliuto* by Donizetti. Sets and costumes for *Petrushka*, *The Golden Cockerel* at Opera, Rome.

1941 Sets and costumes for *Boutique Fantasque*. Sets for *The Firebird*. Sets and costumes for *Le Sacre du Printemps*, *Polovtsian Dances* at Opera, Rome.

1942 Sets and costumes for *La Tempesta* by Rossato and Lattuada. Sets for *I Puritani*. Sets for *Il Re* at Opera, Rome.

1943 Sets and costumes for *Visioni* ballet by Chopin.

1944 Sets and costumes for *Gli Uccelli* ballet by Respighi. Sets for *Andrea Chénier*, *Turandot*.

1945 Sets and costumes for *La Taglioni* ballet by Vittadini. Costumes for ballet *Antiche Danze ed Arie*.

1946 Sets and costumes for *The Three Cornered Hat*, *Coppelia*, *Boris Godunov*.

1947 Sets and costumes for ballet *Evocazioni*. Sets and costumes for ballets *Peter and the Wolf* and *Swan Lake*, and for *Aida* at Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires.

1948 Sets and costumes for *Daphnis and Chloe*, *La Valse*, *Capriccio* by Stravinsky, *Turandot*. Sets for *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Aida*.

1949 Sets and costumes for ballets *Il Carillon Magico*, *Passacaglia* by J.S. Bach, and *Otello*, *Khovantshchina*, *La Bohème*. Sets for *La Forza del Destino*, *I Puritani*, *Die Walküre*, *Andrea Chénier* (with Alexandre Benois: Act I and II).

1950 Sets and costumes for ballet *Peter and the Wolf*, *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung*, and *Raskolnikov* by Peter and Heinrich Sutermeister. Sets for *Sansone e Dalila*.

1951 Sets and costumes for *La Boutique Fantasque* by Rossini/Respighi, *I Vespri Siciliani* by Verdi, *Prince Igor* and *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* by Rimsky-Korsakov. Sets for *Lucretia Borgia*.

1952 Sets and costumes for *Coppelia*, *Polovtsian Dances*, *Capriccio Espagnole*, *Don Carlo*, *Macbeth*, *La Gioconda* by Ponchielli, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *L'Uragano* by Possenti and Rocca.

1953 Sets and costumes for *Il Fiume Innamorato* ballet by R. Biandini, *Cagliostro* ballet by Pizzetti, *Mas'aniello* ballet by Viviani and Napoli, *Boris Godunov*, *Pagliacci*, *Le Wally* by Illica and Catalani.

1954 Sets and costumes for *Il Ballo delle Ingrate* ballet by Monteverdi, *Otello, Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher* by Honegger. Set and costumes for *La Esmeralda* at Royal Festival Hall, London.

1955 Sets and costumes for *Scènes de Ballet* by Stravinsky, *David* by Milhaud, *Il Franco Cacciatore* by Weber, *Il Giudizio Universale* by Tosatti, *Sorotchinzy Fair* by Moussorgsky, *Simon Boccanegra*. Sets for *Palazzo di Cristallo* ballet by Bizet.

1956 Sets and costumes for ballets *L'Amore Stregone* by de Falla, *Lumawig e la Saetta* by Adriano Lualdi, and for *La Fanciulla del West, Fedora*. Costumes for *Matinées et Soirées Musicales* ballet by Britten.

1957 Sets and costumes for *Le Stagioni* ballet by Glazunov, *Caino* by Lattuada, *Tristan und Isolde, Anna Bolena, Un Ballo in Maschera, Turandot*.

1958 Sets and costumes for ballets *Prove di Scena* by Viozzi, *Romeo and Juliet*.

1959 Sets and costumes for *Ernani, A Life for the Tzar, Tosca, Hänsel und Gretel, Fedra* by Pizzetti.

1960 Sets and costumes for *Parsifal, Polinto*.

1961 Sets and costumes for *The Queen of Spades, I Puritani, Sansone e Dalila*.

1962 Sets and costumes for *La Favorita, Rigoletto, Atlantida* by de Falla (completed by Halfter).

1963 Sets and costumes for *Debora e Jaële* by Pizzetti, *Das Rheingold*.

1964 Sets and costumes for *Rienzi*.

1965 Sets and costumes for *Simon Boccanegra*.

1966 Sets and costumes for *Nabucco, Rigoletto*.

1967 Sets and costumes for *Il Trovatore*.

1968 Sets and costumes for *Ballo de Cadetti* ballet by Johann Strauss, *Un Ballo in Maschera*.

1969 Sets and costumes for *L'Assedio di Corinto* by Rossini.

1972 Sets and costumes for *Stiffelio* by Verdi at San Carlo, Naples.

1973 Sets and costumes for *Dubrowski II, La Forza del Destino* at San Carlo, Naples.

1974 Sets and costumes for *Tosca*, and *Boris Godunov* at Teatro Comunale, Florence.

1975 Sets and costumes for *The Siege of Corinth* by Rossini at Metropolitan Opera House, New York, *Boris Godunov* at National Opera, Sofia.

1976 Sets and costumes for *Turandot*. Costumes for *Boris Godunov* for Opéra du Rhin.

1977 Sets for *Le Bal Masqué* at Théâtre des Arts, Rouen.

1978 Sets and costumes for *Luisa Miller* at Teatro Comunale, Trieste.

Erté (Romain de Tirtoff)

1892 10(23) November. Romain de Tirtoff born in St Petersburg.

1910 Studies painting with Ilya Repin and his pupil Dimitri Lossevsky.

1912 Moves to Paris. Studies at Académie Julian under Jean-Paul Laurens. Contributes illustrations of French fashions to Russian magazine *Damski Mir* (*Ladies' World*). Finds work with dressmaker Caroline. Costumes for ballet *The Masks* (not produced).

1913 Meets Prince Nicolas Ourousoff. Contributes to *La Gazette du Bon Ton*. First use of signature Erté (the French and Russian pronunciation of his initial letters). Designs costumes, with José de Zamora, for *Le Minaret* by Jacques Richepin at Théâtre de la Renaissance, Paris. Costumes for ballet *The Minotaur* (not produced).

1913–14 Works for Paul Poiret.

1914 Costumes for *Le Tango* by Jacques Richepin at Théâtre Athénée, Paris, *Aphrodite* by Pierre Loüys at Théâtre de la Renaissance and for *Plus ça Change*. Quarrels irrevocably with Poiret.

1914–23 Lives in Monte Carlo with Ourousoff.

1915 First cover for *Harper's Bazar* in January. Illustrations for *Harper's Bazar*. Costumes for Gaby Deslys. Costumes for *La Fête de St Cyr*.

1916 Illustrations for *Vogue*.

1916–19 Sets and costumes for Mme Rasimi's revues at Théâtre Ba-ta-Clan, Paris, including *Panachot le Dictateur* (1916) and *Gobette de Paris* (1917) with Mistinguett and Maurice Chevalier.

1916–26 Exclusive ten-year contract with *Harper's Bazar*.

1917 Sets and costumes for *La Planète Fémina* at Théâtre Fémina, Paris.

1919 Sets and costumes for *La Marche à l'Etoile* at Théâtre Fémina, Paris. Costumes for Ganna Walska in *Fedora*.

1919–36 Sets and costumes for the Folies-Bergère, Paris: credits include *Paris-Vertige* (1919–20), *C'est de la Folie* (1921), *Folies sur Folies* (1922), *En Pleine Folie* (1923), *Coeurs en Folie* (1924), *Un soir de Folie* (1925), *La Folie du Jour* (1926), *Un vent de Folie* (1927), *La Grande Folie* (1928), *De La Folie Pure* (1929), *Une Coup de Folie* (1930), *Nuit de Folies* (1932), *La Folie d'Amour* (1936).

1920 Costumes for *The Ball of the Gods* in film *Restless Sex* [37]. Costumes for Ganna Walska in *Manon, Faust, Fedora, Tosca, La Bohème, Zaza, Louise, Thaïs, Aphrodite, I Pagliacci, Marta, Monna Vanna*, and for Mary Garden in *L'Amore dei Tre Re* by Montemezzi, all for the Chicago Opera Company.

1921 Costumes for *Les Baisers* at Théâtre Fémina, Paris and *La Femme et le Diable* at Théâtre de l'Apollo, Paris.

1922 Costumes for *Les Trésors de l'Indochine* at L'Alcazar de Marseilles. Costume for Ganna Walska in *Rigoletto* for Opéra, Paris.

1922–23 Sets and costumes for Irving Berlin's *Music Box Revue*. New York.

1922–29 Sets and costumes for George White's *Scandals*, New York.

1923 Costumes for Maria Kouznetsoff in *La Traviata* at Opéra-Comique, Paris.

1923–24 Sets and costumes for Ziegfeld's *Follies*, New York.

1923–25 Illustrations for *Ladies Home Journal*.

1924 Moves to 124 rue de Brancas, Sèvres. Costumes for *Le Secret du Sphinx* by Maurice Rostand at Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris. Costumes for *Bal du Grand Prix* at Opéra, Paris.

1924–39 Illustrations for *The Sketch*, London.

1925 Under contract to MGM in Hollywood to designs film *Paris*. Also works on films *The Mystic, Dance Madness, A Little Bit of Broadway, Time the Comedian, La Bohème* and some costumes for *Ben Hur*.

1926–30 Illustrations for *Art et Industrie*, Paris.

1926–36 New ten-year contract with *Harper's Bazar*.

1927 Sets and costumes for *Manhattan Mary* at Majestic Theatre, New York. Costumes for Lucrezia Bori in *Pelléas et Mélisande, L'Amore dei Tre Re, Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at Metropolitan Opera House, New York.

1928 Costumes for *Lindberg* by Sacha Guitry at Théâtre du Châtelet,

Paris and for Maria Kouznetsoff in *Tosca* and *Manon* at Opéra-Comique, Paris. Article and illustrations on dress for *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (published 1929).

1929 Sets and costumes for *La Princesse Lointaine* by Edmond Rostand at Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris.

1931 Costumes for Ganna Walska in *Pelléas et Mélisande* for Chicago Opera Company.

1932 Sets for *Faust* and *Don Pasquale* for Riga Opera.

1934 Sets and costumes for *Au Temps des Merveilleuses* by Maurice Yvain at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris. Costumes for *Les Travaux d'Hercule* by Claude Terrasse at Théâtre des Capucines, Paris and for *Sappho* by Alphonse Daudet at Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris.

1934–49 Sets and costumes for Pierre Sandrini's revues at Bal Tabarin, Paris.

1935 Moves to Boulogne-sur-Seine. Designs for Alhambra, Paris and French Casino, New York. Costumes for Cécile Sorel in *Amour Royal* at Théâtre de l'ABC, Paris; sets and costumes for *Les Joies du Capitole* by Moretti at Théâtre de la Madeleine, Paris.

1936 Sets and costumes for *Au Soleil du Mexique* by Maurice Yvain at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris and for *Plaisirs de Paris* at Casino de Paris.

1937 Sets and costumes for *It's in the Bag* by Cecil Landau at Saville Theatre, London and for *Yana* by Christine and Tiarko Richepin at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris. Resigns from *Harper's Bazaar* after argument with new editor Carmel Snow.

1938 Sets and costumes for *The Fleet's Lit Up* at Hippodrome, London. *London Symphony* at Palladium, London and *Le Chant du Tzigane* at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris.

1939 Sets and costumes for *Black Velvet* at Palladium, London, *Cécile le Dictateur* by Paul Nivoix at Casino de la Boule, Paris, and for a revue at Opera House, Blackpool.

1940 Sets and costumes for *Phi-phi* by Christiné at Bouffes-Parisiens, Paris, *Mes Amours* at Théâtre Marigny, Paris.

1941 Sets and costumes for *Toi, C'est Moi* by Misraki at Théâtre de l'Apollo, *Trois Jeunes Filles Nues* by Moretti at Théâtre Marigny, Paris.

1941–46 Sets and costumes for revues at Le Lido, Paris.

1942 Sets and costumes for *Les Cent Vierges* by Lecocq at Théâtre de l'Apollo, *Coup de Roulis* by André Messager at Théâtre Marigny, Paris.

1943 Sets and costumes for *Une Femme par Jour* by Van Parys at Théâtre des Capucines, *Belamour* at Théâtre des Nouveautes, Paris.

1944 Sets and costumes for *Don Pasquale* at Théâtre du Palais de Chaillot, *Là-haut* at Théâtre Marigny, Paris.

1945 Sets and costumes for *Le Barbier de Séville* by Rossini for French TV, *Casanova* at Teatro Calderon, Barcelona.

1946 Sets and costumes for *Piccadilly Hayride* at Prince of Wales, London, *Night and the Laughter* at London Coliseum, *On Cherche un Roi* at Théâtre Alhambra, Paris, *Il Matrimonio Segreto* by Cimarosa at Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris, *The Bottom of the Sea* at French Casino, New York.

1947 Sets and costumes for *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* by Poulenc at Opéra-Comique, Paris.

1947–52 Sets and costumes for revues at Opera House, Blackpool.

1948 Sets and costumes for *Ma Mère l'Oye* by Ravel at Opéra-Comique, Paris, *Sueños de Viena* at Teatro Comico, Barcelona, *Self Portrait* for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

Erté, photograph by Marceau

1949 Sets and costumes for *Puss in Boots* at Palladium, London, *The Enchanted Mill* for Marquis de Cuevas.

1950 Sets and costumes (with Alec Shanks) for *Babes in the Wood* at Palladium, London and *Knights of Madness* at Victoria Palace, London.

1951 Sets and costumes for *La Traviata* at Opéra, Paris, *Fancy Free* at Prince of Wales, London, *Histoires d'Eve* at La Nouvelle Eve, Paris, *La Leçon d'Amour dans un Parc* by Guy Lafarge at Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens, Paris, *Parfums* by Germaine Tailleferre at Théâtre de Monte Carlo.

1952 Sets and costumes for *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Padmavati* by Albert Roussel at Teatro San Carlo, Naples, *Cosi fan Tutte* by Mozart at Opéra-Comique, Paris, *Ring out the Bells* at Victoria Palace, London, *Les Filles d'Eve* at La Nouvelle Eve, Paris, and for film *Maske in Blau* for Bavaria Films.

1953 Costumes for film *Die Geschiedene Frau* for Bavaria Films. Sets and costumes for *Caccia al Tesoro* at Teatro delle Quattro Fontane, Rome. Costumes for *Charades* at La Nouvelle Eve, Paris [39].

1954 Sets and costumes for *You'll be lucky* at Adelphi Theatre, London, *Jokers Wild* at Victoria Palace, London, *Rosso e Nero* at San Remo. Costumes for *The Talk of the Town* at Hippodrome, London.

1955 Sets and costumes for *Champagne Cocktail* at Moulin Rouge, Paris, *Gonzague* by Jacques Ibert at Cannes and Rouen, *Campañas de Vana* at Teatro Comico, Barcelona, *La Plume de ma Tante* at Garrick Theatre, London. Costumes for *Such is Life* at Adelphi Theatre, London.

1955–59 Sets and costumes for revues at Opera House, Blackpool.

1956 Sets and costumes for *La Poule Noire* by Manuel Rosenthal at Opéra-Comique, Paris, *The Dave King Show* at Hippodrome, London, *These Foolish Kings* at Victoria Palace, London. Sets for *La Quincaillère de Chicago* at Théâtre de l'ABC, Paris.

1957 Sets and costumes for *Capriccio* by Richard Strauss at Opéra-Comique, Paris, *Pommes a l'Anglaise* at Théâtre de Paris.

1958 Sets and costumes for *Don Cézar de Bazan* by Massenet for Rouen Opera, *La Plume de ma Tante* at Royal Theatre, New York and revues at Drap d'Or, Paris.

1959 Sets and costumes for *Clown Jewels* at Victoria Palace, London, *Don Pasquale* at Opéra-Comique, Paris.

1960 Sets and costumes for *Phèdre* by Racine at Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, Paris. Sets for *Piège pour un Homme Seul* by Robert Thomas at Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens. Sets and costumes for films *Le Coiffeur Miracle* and *Edition Spéciale* by Louis Cuny. Sets and costumes for *Young in Heart* at Victoria Palace, London.

1961 Sets and costumes for *Castor et Pollux* by Rameau at Théâtre Antique de Fourvières, Lyon and for Moulin Rouge, Paris. Sets for *Olé* at Deutschlandshalle, West Berlin.

1962 Sets and costumes for *Twist Appeal* at Folies-Pigalle, Paris, *La Java* at Théâtre Pigalle, Paris, *La Chasse aux Folles* at Drap d'Or, Paris.

1963 Sets and costumes for Latin Quarter, New York.

1964 Sets and costumes for *Wonderworld* at World's Fair, New York, *The Eunuch* by Terence at Comédie de Paris.

1967 Sets and costumes for *Flying Colors* at Expo '67, Montreal.

1968 Costumes for *The Silver Night* ballet for TV, New York.

1970 Awarded title 'Chevalier du Merite, Artistique et Culturel'. Sets and costumes for *Zizi Jeanmaire Show* at Casino de Paris.

1972 Sets and costumes for *Zizi, Je t'Aime* at Casino de Paris.

1974 Sets and costumes for *Ragtime Ballet* at Ballet Théâtre, Angers.

1975 Sets and costumes for *Raga* at Théâtre de la Ville, Paris. Costumes for *Schéhérazade*, Paris.

1976 Awarded 'Officier des Arts et Lettres'.

1977 Honoured with Ziegfeld Award of Excellence at Ziegfeld Ball, New York.

1980 Sets and costumes for *Der Rosenkavalier* by Richard Strauss at Glyndebourne. Costumes for *The Last of Mrs Cheyney* at Cambridge Theatre, London.

Alexandra Exter

Exter's importance has been rediscovered with the recent revival of interest in early twentieth-century Russian art but when she died in poverty and obscurity her work had been ignored for years. So only few facts are known about this elusive artist's life and work and references to them have been confused and contradictory.

1884 6(19) January. Born in Belostok near Kiev. School at Kiev.

1906 Studies at l'Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris at the studio of Charles Delval. Meets and befriends Picasso, Braque, Max Jacob, Apollinaire, Marinetti.

Alexandra Exter

1909–14 Her marriage to a rich tea merchant allows her to travel regularly between Kiev, Moscow and Paris. Her news about art and artistic life in Paris is influential in Russia. Visits Italy.

1914 Designs house curtain for Kamerny Theatre, Moscow.

1916 Works with Aristarkh Lentulov, designer of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at Kamerny Theatre, Moscow, by decorating the entrance, foyer, staircase and proscenium arch of theatre with cubist painting. Sets and costumes for *Famira Kifared* by Annensky at Kamerny Theatre, Moscow.

1917 Costumes for *Etudes de Bach* for Leonidov Ballet Company at Kiev. Sets and costumes for *Salomé* by Wilde at Kamerny Theatre.

1918 Sets and costumes for *Petrushka* ?opera by Grechaninov in Odessa. Set for *The Town, Venice.*

?1918/19 Sets and costumes for *Electric Dolls* by Marinetti.

?1919/20 Sets and costumes for *The Daughter of Iorio* by d'Annunzio.

1919 Sets and costumes for *La Dama Duende* by Calderon at 2nd Studio, Moscow Art Theatre [some references put date 1921, others 1924].

1920–21 Sets and costumes for *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare at Kamerny Theatre, Moscow.

1921 Sets and costumes for *Entremesés, Comical interludes* by Cervantes at 1st Studio, Moscow Art Theatre (?not produced). Sets and costumes for *Smerts Tarelkina* (*The Death of Tarelkin*) by Soukhovo-Kobylin at 1st Studio, Moscow Art Theatre. Sets and costumes for *Tovarishch Khlestakov* (*Comrade Khlestakov*) by Smolin at Drama Theatre of the Government Theatre Agency, Moscow.

1921–24 Works with Boris Romanoff in Berlin at Romantique theatre. Sets and costumes for *Ballet Caucasien* and *Ballet Satanique* (?latter not produced).

1923 Designs pavilion for *Isvestia* newspaper at Pan-Russian Agriculture and Industry Exhibition, Moscow.

1924 Leaves Russia to live in Paris. Sets and costumes for film *Aelita, Turandot* by Gozzi at Teatro Manzoni, Milan. *Suite de Danses* for Boris Romanoff in Paris (? not produced).

1925 Teaches at Académie d'Art Contemporain de F. Léger and in her own studio in Paris. Projects for ballets choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska.

1926 Projects for ballets choreographed by Elsa Krueger for

Romantique theatre, *Don Juan, Consort of Death* by S.L. Poliakov and N.P. Potemkin, ?*King Lear, Pantomime Espagnole*. Designs marionettes.

1927 Costumes for film *La Fille d'Hélios*. Sets and costumes for *Don Juan* at Opernhaus, Cologne, *La Donna sullo scudo* by O. Gilbertini and Ugo Betti at Teatro Tatiana Pavlova, Rome. Projects for *The Merchant of Venice, Othello, Faust* by Gounod, operetta.

1927–28 Sets and costumes for *Le Cirque* for Elsa Krueger.

1928 Sets and costumes for *Night of Venice* for film *Les Dieux ont soif* (? project).

1929 Sets and costumes for *Don Juan* by Elsa Krueger, project for Cologne (see 1926 above), for film *Fécondité*.

1930 Publishes *Alexandra Exter: Décors de Théâtre* with preface by Alexander Tairov, limited edition of 150 copies.

1930–?34 Sets and costumes for *Prologue de Revue* at Théâtre des Nouveautés, Paris.

1932/?33 Costume for dance recital for Mme Mila Cirul at Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Paris.

1933 Projects for *Les Equivoques d'Amour, The Bacchae* by Euripides.

?1935 ? Projects for *La Double Inconstance* by Marivaux and a curtain.

?1937 ?Projects for *Seven against Thebes* by Aeschylus.

1948 ? Projects for *Orestes* by Euripides.

1949 17 March. Dies at Fontenay-aux-Roses.

Nathalie Gontcharova

(see also Michel Larionov)

1881 21 June. Born in Ladizhno, the family estate, in province of Tula.

1891–98 Attends Gymnasium 4 in Moscow.

1898 Hesitates over choice of career but finally decides to enrol in School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Moscow. Meets Larionov.

1903 With Larionov, visits his parents at Tiraspol.

1905 Meets Diaghilev.

1906 Exhibits at Union of Russian Artists in St Petersburg and Sàlon d'Automne in Paris (setting designed by Bakst), both exhibitions organised by Diaghilev.

1908 Exhibits at *The Golden Fleece* exhibition, Moscow.

1909 Sets and costumes for *The Beadle* and *Zobeida's Wedding* at Kraft Private Studio, Moscow.

1910 Exhibits thirty-two paintings at *Jack of Diamonds* exhibition in Moscow.

1912 Exhibits at Roger Fry's *Post- Impressionist* exhibition, Grafton Gallery, London.

1913 Major retrospective exhibition (768 paintings from 1900–13) in Moscow.

1914 Sets, costumes and front cloth for *Le Coq d'Or* at Opéra, Paris for DBR. Sets and costumes for *The Fan* by Goldoni at Kamerny Theatre, Moscow.

1915 Sets for *The Invisible City of Kitezh* by Rimsky-Korsakov (not produced). Leaves Russia permanently with Larionov. Works on costumes for *Liturgie* for DBR (not produced). Some early designs for *Les Noces* by Igor Stravinsky.

1916 Sets and costumes for *Rhapsodie Espagnole* by Ravel, *Triaña* by Isaac Albeniz, *Espagna* (from *Rhapsodie Espagnole*) for DBR (not produced). Some costumes for *Contes Russes* at Teatro Eugenia-Victoria, San Sebastien. Costumes for revival of *Sadko* in New York for DBR.

1920 Publication of *L'Art Décoratif théâtral moderne*.

1921 Sets and costumes for *Russian Toys* by Rimsky-Korsakov at Palace Theater, New York.

1922 Costumes for the *Contes de Fées* in *Le Mariage de la Belle au Bois Dormant* at Opéra, Paris for DBR [45]. Sets and costumes for *Columbine's Scarf* by Hugo von Hofmannstahl at Kikimora Theater, Berlin.

1923 Sets, costumes and backcloth for *Les Noces* by Stravinsky at Théâtre de la Gaieté-Lyrique, Paris for DBR [46].

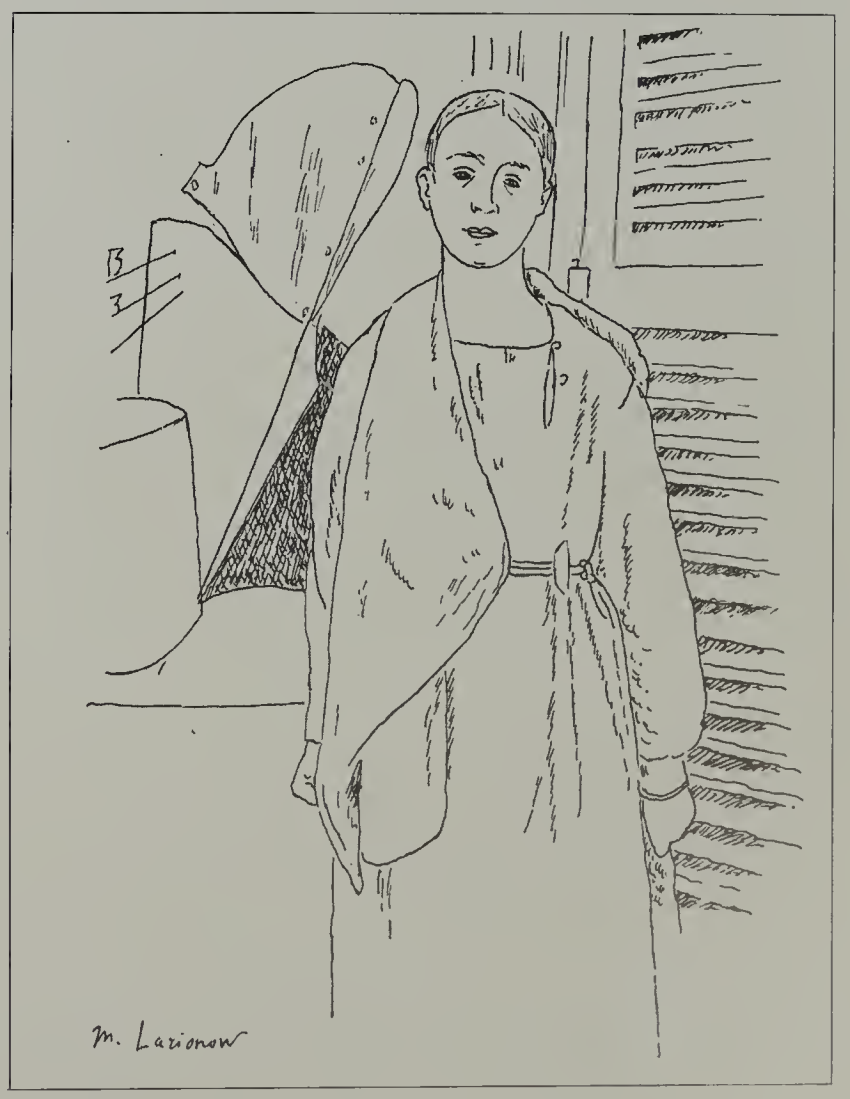
1924 Sets and costumes for *Nuit sur le Mont Chauve* by Moussorgsky at Théâtre de Monte Carlo for DBR. Sets and designs for marionettes for *Karagueuz, Gardien de l'honneur de son ami* and *Fête au Village* for Julie Sazanova's marionette theatre.

1926 Sets and costumes for revival of *The Firebird* by Stravinsky at Lyceum Theatre, London for DBR.

1930 Organises, with Larionov, exhibition *Rétrospective des Oeuvres de Diaghilew*. Costumes for *La Petite Catherine* by Alfred Savoir at Théâtre Antoine. Paris.

1932 Costumes for *Sur le Boristhène* by Prokofiev at Opéra, Paris; *Bolero* by Ravel at Opéra-Comique, Paris; *On ne s'avise jamais de tout* by Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny at Théâtre Pigalle, Paris. Sets for *Tzar Saltan* by Rimsky-Korsakov at Kovno, Lithuania. Sets and costumes for *Sorotchintzy Fair* by Moussorgsky at Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires. Sets and costumes for *Divertissement* by Tchaikovsky at Opéra, Paris.

Portrait of Nathalie Gontcharova by Michel Larionov



1933 Sets and costumes for *La Vie Parisienne* by Offenbach and *Voyage d'une Danseuse* with music by Mozart both at Chauve Souris, New York.

1934 Costumes for Olga Spessivtseva in *La Pavane, Menuet* ballet by Rameau, *L'Oiseau Prophète* ballet by Schumann. Sets and costumes for *Les Jouets* at Théâtre de Monte Carlo for Ballets René Blum.

1935 Sets and costumes for *Mephisto Valse* by Liszt at Opéra-Comique, Paris, *Amour Sorcier* by de Falla at London Coliseum.

1937 Sets and costumes for ballet version *Le Coq d'Or* at Théâtre de Monte Carlo.

1938 Naturalised French. Sets and costumes for *Bogatyri* by Borodin for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and *Cendrillon* by d'Erlanger and *Dans les Steppes de l'Asie Centrale* by Borodin.

1939 Sets and costumes for the ballets *La Tragédie de l'Horloge* by Liszt, *Les Forces Errantes* by Scriabin at Théâtre Royal du Parc, Brussels.

1939–42 Sets and costumes for the ballets *Carnaval de Venise* by Goldoni, *Temple Egyptien* by Arensky, *Vision Antique* by Gagotsky, *Coup de Bambou* by Satie, *La Veillée* by Scriabin, *Obsession* by Tchaikovsky, *Le Lac des Cygnes, Marchand de Poupées* by Tcherepnine, all for Compagnie des Ballets de Boris Kniaseff.

1940 Sets and costumes for *Sorotchintzy Fair* by Moussorgsky at Salle Pleyel, Paris and for *Capriccio* at Théâtre Marigny, Paris.

1941 Sets and costumes for *Stenka Rasin* by Tcherepnine for Ballet Russe de Paris.

1942 Sets and costumes for *La Princesse des Ursins* ballet by André Jolivet at Théâtre de la Cité Ch. Dullin, Paris.

1943 Sets and costumes for *Goulnar* ballet by Yraklie Djabadari (not produced).

1946 *Chota Roustaveli* (Gontcharova's designs not used).

1948 Sets for *The Barber of Seville* by Rossini at Cambridge Theatre, London.

1949 Sets and costumes for *La Péri, Un Coeur de Diamant* ballet by Jean Hubeau at Théâtre de Monte Carlo for Marquis de Cuevas.

1954 Sets and costumes for revival of *The Firebird* at Empire Theatre, Edinburgh.

1955 Marries Larionov.

1957 Sets and costumes for *Les Sylphides* by Chopin, *Eros ou l'Ange de Fiesole* by Tchaikovsky, *Islamey* by Balakirev, *Igrouchki* by Rimsky-Korsakov, *Les Elphes* by Mendelssohn, *Les Aventures d'Arlequin* ballet by Beethoven at Théâtre de Monte Carlo all for Le Théâtre d'Art du Ballet company.

1958 Sets and costumes for *Le Carnaval* by Schumann at Monte Carlo for Le Théâtre d'Art du Ballet company.

1962 17 October. Dies in Paris.

Michel Larionov

(see also Nathalie Gontcharova)

1881 22 May. Born at Tiraspol in Southern Russia.

1891 Attends Voskvesensky Institute in Moscow.

1898 Decides to be a painter. Attends School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Moscow. Meets Gontcharova.

1903 Visits his parents at Tiraspol with Gontcharova. Meets Diaghilev.

1906 Travels with Diaghilev to Paris. Exhibits at Union of Russian Artists in St Petersburg and Salon d'Autumne in Paris (setting

Self-portrait by Michel Larionov, 1916

designed by Bakst), both exhibitions organised by Diaghilev. Returns to Russia via London.

1907 Begins to develop his own style.

1908 Exhibits at *The Golden Fleece* exhibition, Moscow. Organises exhibition in Moscow of French painting (Sisley, Picasso, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse, Van Dongen, Braque et al.) under the auspices of *The Golden Fleece* magazine. Exhibits himself in Russian section.

1909 Adopts futurist manifesto published by Marinetti.

1910 Organises *Jack of Diamonds* group with Bourluk brothers and arranges exhibition. Exhibits fifteen paintings. Develops his theories of rayonnism.

1912 Writes article 'Rayonnist Painting'. Exhibits at Roger Fry's *Post-Impressionist* exhibition, Grafton Gallery, London.

1913 Publishes *Manifesto of Rayonnists and Futurists*. Organises exhibition of icons and *loubki* (popular, folk-art, hand-coloured prints stencilled on wood or glass objects such as trays and boxes). ?Set for *The Jugglers in Moscow*.

1914 Mobilised as lieutenant in the reserve. Wounded and retired.

1915 Coloured projections and costumes for *Histoires Naturelles* by

Ravel (not produced). Sets and costumes for *Soleil de Minuit* by Rimsky-Korsakov at Grand Theatre, Geneva for DBR. Leaves Russia permanently with Gontcharova.

1916 Sets and costumes for *Kikimora* at Teatro Eugenia-Victoria, San Sebastien for DBR (the first episode in *Contes Russes*, preceded by *Khorovode*)[48].

1917 Sets and costumes for other parts of *Contes Russes: Bova Korolevitch, Baba Yaga* and an *Epilogue* at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris for DBR.

1918 Sets and costumes for further parts of *Contes Russes: Princesse Cygne, Koliada Maleda (Chant de Noël), Les Funerailles du Dragon* at London Coliseum for DBR.

1921 Curtain, sets and costumes for *Chout ou le Bouffon* by Prokofiev at Théâtre de la Gaieté-Lyrique, Paris for DBR.

1922 Curtain, sets and costumes for *Renard* by Stravinsky at Opéra, Paris for DBR.

1924 Sets and costumes for *Karagueuz* for Adolph Bolm, Chicago (not produced). Curtain and sets for *Karagueuz, Gardien de l'honneur de son ami* (with Gontcharova) at Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, Paris for Julie Sazonova's marionette theatre.

1929 Sets and costumes for revival of *Renard* at Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris.

1930 Organises, with Gontcharova, exhibition *Rétrospective des oeuvres de Diaghilew*. Sets for *La Petite Catherine* by Alfred Savoir at Théâtre Antoine, Paris. Costumes for *Symphonie Classique* by Prokofiev at Théâtre Pigalle, Paris.

1932 Sets for *Sur le Boristhène* by Prokofiev at Opéra, Paris.

1935 Sets and costumes for *Port-Said* by Konstantin Konstantinov at London Coliseum.

1938 Naturalised French.

1955 Marries Gontcharova.

1964 10 May. Dies at Fontenay-aux-Roses.

Jacques Manuel

Unless otherwise stated, credits are for films.

1897 3 September. Born in Paris.

1925 Begins in film industry as assistant to Marcel l'Herbier.

1926 Art director of *Le Diable au Coeur*, costumes for *Le Vertige*.

1928 Costumes for *L'Argent*.

1930 Costumes for *L'Enfant de l'Amour* [49].

1931 Art director of *Le Mystère de la Chambre Jaune*. Costumes for *Le Parfum de la Dame en Noir*.

1932–42 Worked as designer for the Rideau Gris repertory theatre company in Marseilles mostly on a classical repertoire of plays by Molière, de Musset, Merimée, Beaumarchais, Dumas fils, Becque etc.

1933 Costumes for *L'Epervier*.

1934 Costumes for *Veille d'armes, L'Aventurier*.

1935 Sets and costumes for *Le Bonheur*.

1936 Costumes for *Les Hommes Nouveaux, La Porte Large, Trois . . . Six . . . Neuf*.

1937 Costumes for *La Citadelle du Silence, La Dame de Malacca*.

1938 Costumes for *Adrienne Lecouvreur, Trois Valses*.

1939 Costumes for *L'Esclave Blanche*.

1943 Costumes for *Vautrin*.

1944 Costumes for *La Père Goriot*.

1945 Costumes for *Le Capitan*.

1948 Costumes for *Une grande fille toute simple* directed by Manuel.

1949 Costumes for *Julie de Carneilhan* directed by Manuel.

1951 Appointed professor of 'Art du Costume' at IDHEC (Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographique).

1968 13 April. Dies in Paris.

José de Zamora

Facts about this artist's career have been difficult to trace.

1890 Born in Alicante, Spain.

1913 Is already working as assistant to Poiret in Paris when Romain de Tirtoff (Erté) arrives from Russia. Designs costumes with Erté for *Le Minaret* by Jacques Richepin at Théâtre de la Renaissance, Paris.

1914 Contributes illustrations to *La Gazette du Bon Ton*.

*c.*1915–18 Returned to Spain.

1920 Begins association with the Casino de Paris by drawing costumes for *Paris qui Jazz* designed by Poiret.

from 1923 Sets and costumes for revues at Le Palace theatre, Paris: credits include *Toutes les Femmes* (1923), *Oh! les Belles Filles* (1923), *Paris-Voyeur* (1925), *Le Luxe de Paris* (1928), *Vive la Femme* (1929); and sets and costumes for revues at Concert Mayol including *Oh! quel nu!!!* (1922), *Cache ta Pudeur* (1923), *Toute Nue!!* (1924) [51–56], *Très Excitante* (1926), *Revue des Femmes Nouvelles* (1927).

1924 Sets and costumes for *Le Taureau de Phalaris* for Pour L'Amour de L'Art group.

from 1925 Sets and costumes for revues at Moulin Rouge, Paris: credits include *La Grande Revue du Moulin Rouge-New York* (1925), *Mieux que Nue* (1925), *La Revue Mistinguett* (1925–26), *Montmartre aux Nues* (1926–27), *La Revue: ça . . . c'est Paris* (1927).

1926–27 Designs all the costumes for *Une revue . . . (1830–1930)* at Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, Paris.

from 1926 Sets and costumes for the Folies-Bergère, Paris: credits include *La Folie du Jour* (1926–27), *Un vent de Folie* (1927), *La Grande Folie* (1928), *De la Folie Pure* (1929).

from *c.*1940 Overall production designer for revues at Casino de Paris including *Exciting Paris* (1948), *Gay Paris* (1951), *Une revue de tonnerre* (1953), *Sensations* (1956), *Plaisirs* (1961).

1941 Sets and costumes for *La Vie de Bohème* by Jean Cocteau and Jean Tranchant at Théâtre Monceau, Paris.

1943 Sets and costumes for *Jan, le Stropiat* by Guilhène for Groupement d'art dramatique.

1947–48 Sets and costumes for *Violettes Impériales* at Théâtre Mogador, Paris.

1950 Sets and costumes for *La Danseuse aux Etoiles* operetta by Scotto at Théâtre Mogador, Paris.

1954 Sets and costumes for *Les Amants de Venise* operetta by Scotto at Théâtre Mogador, Paris. Other credits at Théâtre Mogador include *Naples ou le baiser de feu* and *Les amours de Don Juan*. He was a self-imposed exile from Spain during much of Franco's regime but returned late in life.

1966 Sets and costumes for *De Madrid al Cielo*, a musical in 'Teatrorama' at Teatro-Circo Price, Barcelona.

1971 October: exhibition at Gallery Blaumar, Sitges.
3 December. Dies in Sitges.

Selected bibliography

This selected bibliography does not include reference to reviews of productions in newspapers or periodicals which are mentioned under 'literature B' in the main body of the catalogue. For further and wider reading about the subjects, reference should be made to those works noted as containing extensive bibliographies (marked 'e.b.').

Over the last thirty years there has been a great revival of interest in Russian art of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and in design for the theatre. Many books and articles have now been written about these subjects which, in many cases, overlap each other. Hardly a week goes by without an addition to the bibliography. Quite recently, also, a number of revealing books on these subjects has been published in the USSR.

The bibliography is divided into two parts and is confined to those books, articles in periodicals and exhibition catalogues which relate to the artists whose work is in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection and which have been consulted in the preparation of this catalogue:

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